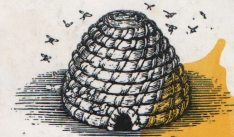


HERE AND NOW

DOUBLE ISSUE 7 & 8

75p



in this issue



VIOLENCE



CONSPIRACY

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Initials
P664



EMPTION

EMPLOYMENT



'ASSAULTS ON CULTURE'



POLICING THE TRUTH



END OF BAUDRILLARD



'SECRETS' OF GUY DEBORD



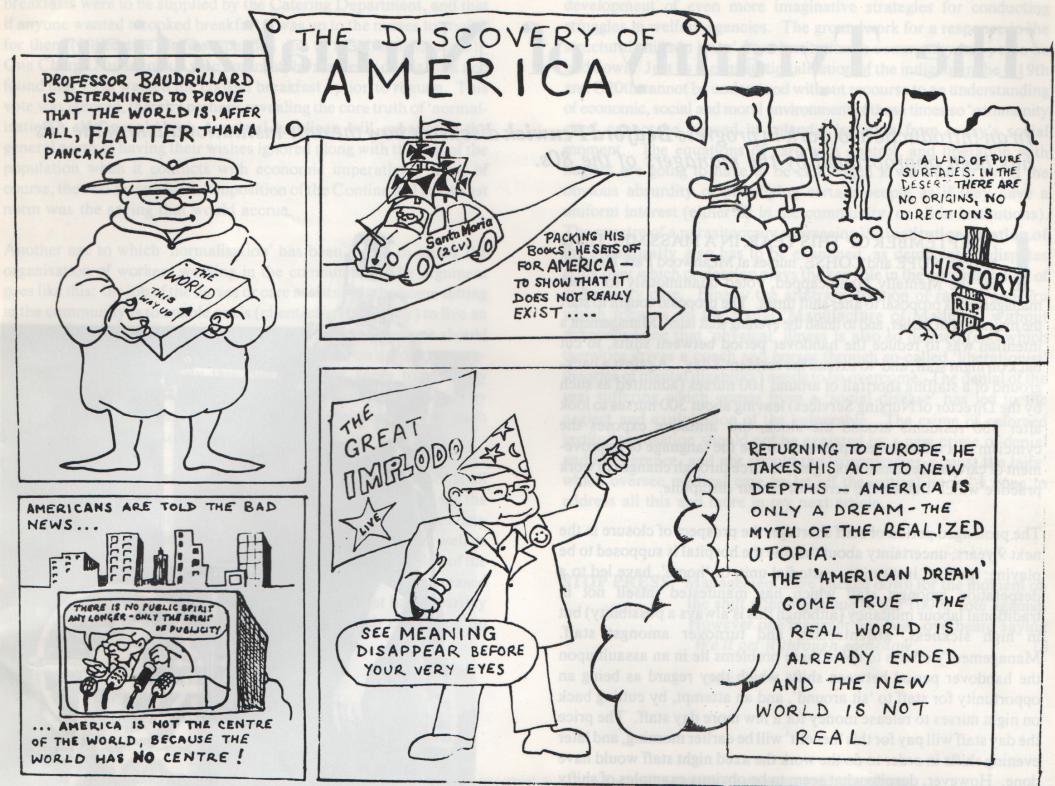
RESTRUCTURING HEALTH



POLAND - THE ORANGE ALTERNATIVE

and more.

16 page EASTERN EUROPEAN SUPPLEMENT



Obituary (...only more so)

BAUDRILLARD AT THE ICA NOVEMBER 18th

An overflow audience watched a video-relay in the next room; we had to make do with the 'real' thing. Jonathan Ree did his best to translate as he went along, mercifully missing out the bits which, giving the argument a semblance of plausibility, might have broken the spell. The occasion was not meant to be **about** such things. ICA clones in eighties period costume (blousons noirs to a person) gave a good impression of listening politely while Baudrillard took us through his familiar routines. **America** (for which this was a live advert) was about a **mythical** 'America': a world with no past, no meaning, no negation. It is 'our' destiny to be swallowed up into this myth.

Baudrillard's books are flimsy things these days: only repeating phrases you've read in the reviews, and no more than elaborations of the blurbs on their dust jackets. No longer just 'asleep at the wheel' - he is on automatic pilot. The idea of a future without origins is a necessary concept for a theorist on the road to nowhere.

A few half-hearted questions, whose answers one could mouth for oneself as one heard them being asked. The only surprise of the evening was that Baudrillard so evidently takes himself seriously. Neither the audience nor Jonathan Ree did. Those of us who believe that some, at least, of what he is saying is actually **true** were reaffirmed in our refusal to give the medium any credit for the message.

The Tyranny of Normalization

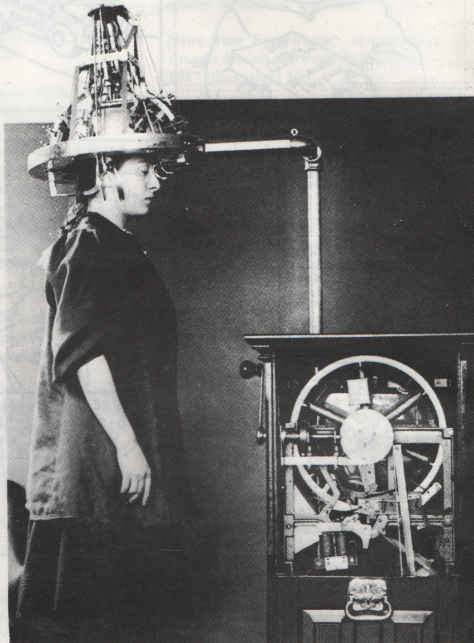
In an introduction to work in progress Bedford Fenwick discusses how the anti-institutionalism of the 60s has been appropriated by the managers of the 80s.

IN SEPTEMBER OF THIS YEAR, IN A MASS MEETING by both NUPE and COHSE, nurses at Meanwood Park Hospital for the Mentally Handicapped, voted unanimously to reject management's proposal to alter shift times. The proposal sought to start the morning shift earlier, and to finish the evening shift later. Management's intention was to reduce the handover period between shifts, to cut back on night staff, and 'to extend the resident's day'. Against a background of a staffing shortfall of around 100 nurses (admitted as such by the Director of Nursing Services) leaving about 300 nurses to look after 380 residents around the clock, this initiative exposes the cynicism of a management prepared to use the language of improvement of care, and extension of rights, to force through changes in work practice which tighten the screw of labour discipline.

The prolonged period of staff shortage, the prospect of closure in the next 9 years, uncertainty about the role the hospital is supposed to be playing: medical institution, custodial unit, or 'home', have led to a desperation amongst staff which has manifested itself not in traditional labour militancy (although this is always a possibility) but in high sickness, absenteeism, and turnover amongst staff. Management's efforts to solve these problems lie in an assault upon the handover period between shifts which they regard as being an opportunity for staff to 'sit around', and an attempt, by cutting back on night nurses to release money for a few more day staff. The price the day staff will pay for this 'benefit' will be earlier morning, and later evening shifts in order to do the work the axed night staff would have done. However, despite what seem to be obvious examples of shifty managerial practice, the balance of argument is not all against them, because managers have appropriated the rhetoric of 'patients rights' and employed it in the cause of 'efficiency'.

There can be no question that the life of a person caught up in long-term residential care is devoid of rights, independence and dignity. The critique of institutions such as Meanwood Park Hospital has been around for as long as the institutions themselves. When the Mental Deficiency Act was passed in 1913, after public hysteria about the contamination of the species by the uncontrolled breeding of the handicapped (a hysteria generated in support of an interventionist application of Darwinian theory and the foundation of the Eugenics Movement) it was opposed by a small group of MPs who described it as putting 'into prison 100,000 people who are present at liberty'. It has only been in the last 20 years however that the current development of psychological theory (social skills training etc.), the use of long-term depot-injections of tranquillisers, the sixties anti-institutional movements and the mistaken belief by Govt. that community care would be cheaper have combined to make the break-up of the mental handicap hospital unstoppable. However much to be welcomed in principle, and indeed in practice where 'community care' is not either a euphemism for neglect, nor the devolution of all unpleasant facets of the institution into the community, the closure programmes have converged too conveniently with other interest for the radical to give then unqualified approval.

The interest which concerns us here is the economic. Local management have used one of the key words in the 'community care' vocabulary, to put through a rearrangement of working practices for the benefit of reducing the staff budget. The key word is 'normalisation'



a word loaded with interpretation and significance, but which in this circumstance means creating the condition where life can be lived as ordinarily as possible. The concept correctly identifies living in an institution as an abnormal experience. (I am going to resist the temptation to get involved with the tar-baby of normality in this article, while acknowledging that everything I have to say on this subject here is pretty provisional). It argues that the 'abnormality' of people who live in such a situation is often posterior rather than prior to entry, and that there is no reason that through sensitive and prolonged psychological care 'abnormal behaviours' can be unlearned and the passage from institution to community be smoothed. I shall have a lot more to say about this concept in my next article; I'm sure that for many, like myself, the behaviourist and authoritarian implications of this idea have not been missed. Be that as it may, 'normalisation' is the key process through which a mentally handicapped person must go in order to find his way into the community, and it is a concept with an almost hypnotic hold on 'caring' professionals in this field. If something can be proved to fit the category of 'normalisation' it is rarely questioned. Its use for purposes other than 'decarceration' have therefore not been lost on the more canny of hospital managers.

For example, earlier this year, it was announced by the Catering Manager that 'Continental Breakfasts' were more 'normal' than

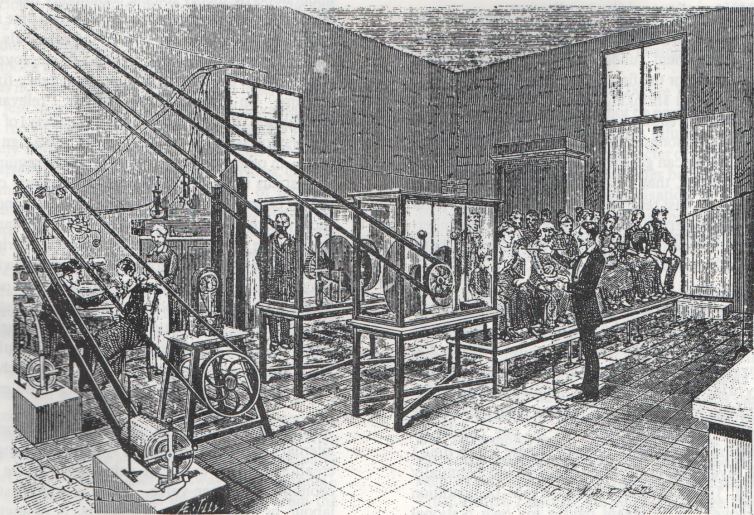
cooked breakfasts, due to the increased health consciousness of people in the community (these words are rapidly losing their meaning in this article!). It was declared that from a certain date only Continental breakfasts were to be supplied by the Catering Department, and that if anyone wanted a cooked breakfast it was up to the nurses to cook it for them (a directive since suspended due to a Salmonella scare). One Charge Nurse took a vote amongst the residents on his villa and found that 75% wanted the cooked breakfast option to remain. This vote was ignored, thereby perhaps revealing the core truth of 'normalisation': that people with a mental handicap will experience the general norm of having their wishes ignored along with the rest of the population when it conflicts with economic imperatives. For, of course, the real reason for the imposition of the Continental Breakfast norm was the saving that would accrue.

Another use to which 'normalisation' has been put, it to attack the organisation of workers working in the community. The argument goes like this: the job of the nurses or care assistant in the home setting in the community is to enable one's (client/charge/friend?) to live an ordinary life, his home should be treated as such, and no one should visit without his or her permission, hence the ban on union representatives visits; unfortunately this rule does not apply to visits by management. In fact this rule could be applied quite imaginatively by people to get management completely off their backs, but such developments remain to be seen.

The latest use by management of the weapon of 'normalisation' is all the more serious for the damage it could do to the real project for the improvement of the lives and rights of indigent people in any institutional setting (and that includes medical institutions as well as psychiatric and mental handicap). By associating the extension of the residents' day, a perfectly legitimate and overdue aim, with increased exploitation of a demoralised workforce, management have possibly sown the seeds of an obdurate conservatism which could line up against any improvement in the lives of residents.

So far nurses at the hospital have not been tempted to take a merely negative line and are seeking to connect their rejection of the altered shifts with a demand for more staff. Defeat, however will not help the development of even more imaginative strategies for conducting struggles in welfare agencies. The groundwork for a response to the structural shifts in 'care' from institution to community has yet to be laid down. Just as the institutionalisation of the indigent in the C19th and C20th cannot be understood without recourse to an understanding of economic, social and moral environment of those times so 'community care' cannot be viewed in splendid isolation from today's social moment. The equations of care with control, and liberation with neglect are going to have to be challenged if we wish to avoid the obvious absurdity of classifying certain people as if they have a uniform interest (either all in the community, or all in institutions). The spectre of a parasitocracy overseeing the **institutionalisation of the community** also has to be examined, as demarcation disputes erupt over which profession plays the key role in the administration of community care. Finally the arbitrary division of radical concern which focuses on the social 'Manufacture of Madness' without acknowledging that 'physical' illness is also so defined (and which therefore drives a coach and horses through so-called 'liberationist' theories of mental disability) needs to be overcome. The denial of the real suffering which comes from a 'social disease' has led to the neglect and exploitation of the vulnerable. The crime of enforced institutionalisation should not be expiated by a new crime of denial and indifference, and nor should the 'conspiracies against the laity' which oversee medical care be left off the critical hook. I hope to address all this and more in my next article.

STOP PRESS: Management have backed down for the moment on the shift alterations due to the 100% vote against. However one manager has been overheard saying 'We'll get it through somehow'. □



Electrical Therapy practised at the French Asylum at La Salpetriere towards the end of the 19th century

Cash in Hand

As an activity which might appear as solely utilitarian in design, self-employment instead harbours the possibility of a challenge to the dominion of the commodity economy. Drawing on personal experiences, Arch Stanton argues that, in the face of difficulties, old pre-capitalist forms of exchange, in which gift and use-value are prominent, have become a significant means of survival.

THE IDEA OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN SO wholeheartedly embraced by the Right that it would seem unnecessarily provocative to examine it with a less than condemnatory attitude. But that is what I propose to do here, not in order to give self-employment an unequivocal seal of approval, but in order to know the beast better, to separate the reality from the ideology.

Britain's 2.5 million self-employed may be involved in very different sectors of the economy, may have very different work practices and belong to very different scales of operation, but they share one thing at least in common (remembering that company directors are employees usually drawing a salary). To be self-employed is to have the limits of one's personhood coterminous with the boundaries of one's economic function. It is the ultimate atomised 'homo economicus'; all monies received by him or her from whatever source may be taxable income unless proved otherwise, all expenditure for whatever purpose must be listed and established for possible use against tax, invoices and receipts fly back and forth like confetti. The self-employed person never clocks off; he is Economic Man 24 hours a day doing the paperwork as an unpaid tax collector for HM Customs & Excise at weekends - always looking for business; friends become clients, bad debtors become enemies.

Why would 2.5 million people choose to 'commodify' their lives like this? Of course, for many there is little choice. The Enterprise Allowance Scheme (government funded and run by the MSC) currently paying £40 a week for the first year of self-employment, is an alternative to terminal and shrinking supplementary benefit. I have seen the same £1000 (required as capital to qualify for the scheme) circulating rapidly amongst a dozen or more unemployed to ensure the maximum number can get their hands on the government loot. In these circumstances, that £1000 loses its cash-value (in many cases it is never spent, just returned to the original lender) and becomes pure sign, and a forgery at that, like fake I.D. for an under-age drinker. This was before the rules were relaxed and a bank overdraft facility for £1000 was deemed sufficient.

Self-employment has also become one of the avenues for the advancement of the 'higher educated' classes, who in the seventies might have found the road to preferment through the local social services and public sector. For myself, lacking a skill or competitive qualification, I emerged from study in the early eighties, in a climate of shrinking job opportunities, with neither work experience nor any clear idea of how to gain it. I ended up working full time for no pay (whilst on supplementary benefit) at a small local printers, during which time I tried to make myself invaluable in the hope that I would eventually create a job for myself. In the end I was offered a job - on condition that I went self-employed. This meant paying my own National Insurance contributions (saving the employer around £13 per week and costing me around £5 a week), sorting out my own tax (and paying accountant's fees), no sick pay, no holidays, no unemployment benefit and so on. In return for this I got a job, the opportunity to fiddle my taxes, and the illusory feeling of having no boss.

This 'rugged individualist' view of self-employed as being a freedom from bosses and bureaucrats is one of its most attractive claims. In fact, at the sharp end of the market, the idea of 'being your own boss' is a nonsense. As anyone will tell you unless you work all you can, as hard as you can, you don't eat. No having a shit in the firm's time - it's your time; no spinning out a job - throughput and turnover is all. 'Being your own slave' is a more appropriate description. In my case I didn't even own my means of production which meant that if I wanted to do any jobs other than those given to me by the owner of the print shop, I had to rent the use of the press, after 6 p.m., at £12 an hour.

Quite clearly this is a new form of labour disciplining (or at least the resurrection of an old form). Ordinary employment is still largely based on wages paid for time, and managerial theorists expend much effort in devising ways of maintaining control over that time through techniques of surveillance and psychology. In the case of self-employment Capital has emancipated itself from the task of direct supervision of work; labour discipline being guaranteed by a totality of norms expressed by the business environment, which are essentially based around the reward and punishment of success or failure. A process of internalising the values and norms of business begins once one enters the self-employed scene. For a start, labour, long understood by theory to be a commodity like any other, takes on an added immediacy as such when one's own time must be costed out by oneself and added to the cost of the materials consumed to price a finished product. Labour for the self-employed however, is rarely costed out at the uncomplicated, immutably-fixed rate many would imagine. In assessing the demand ('relevant' desire expressed through and in terms of the market economy) of a finished article, one has first to assess the exchange value of the sign that the article represents - in other words the effort of design required to ensure the article's status in an imagined political economy of the sign. Now this can, of course, be regarded as mental labour and rigorously costed as such. Such 'creative' labour though is difficult to quantify and in practice the cost of one's own labour must be trimmed or expanded at the final stage to allow for what 'the market will bear'. Baudrillard draws dubious conclusions from his otherwise poignant observations. There is a political economy of the sign, but instead of the plethora of different forms of value operating as though in some separate economy, each with their own formulae and rules of transformation, there is alas only one economy, that of exchange-value to which everything must be reduced, including those much-examined signs.

There is little real or rigorous sense to theories which talk of the internal logic of ambivalence of symbolic exchange or of a Veblenesque creation of sign exchange-value through the destruction (sic) of economic exchange-value. There is really just exchange-value - of labour, or time, of signs, of emotions or of anything else you care to choose including the unequal balance of power between different agents meeting 'freely' in the market place. And although there remain untouched, social relations existing outside the capitalist mode of exchange, the psychology of self-employment demands that these be costed too, and battling with the colonising tendency of that psychology is another part of what it means to be self-employed.

I began to carve out a little more space for myself as opposed to the perpetual beat of exchange values when I finally managed to gain possession of a printing machine. To be an autonomous artisan is in fact an almost unrealisable state of affairs nowadays. The sheer cost of starting up nearly always necessitates heavy borrowing and places one in what can only be described as a neo-feudal relationship with the centres of financial control. Once a credit relationship is entered into one can rarely be said to actually own one's own means of production-control, yes, but subject to the fact that, in the first instance, one must use that control to produce the 'tithe' owing to the bank or lender. However nominal possession does, once the rent and tithe has been paid, open up the self-employed to forms of production and exchange different from the usual norms of business behaviour. This largely exists on the basis of social connections amongst friends and other self-employed individuals in a similar 'unestablished' position. Shared economic problems go some way to explaining a curious network of mutual aid springing up between people who, theoretically at least, are supposed to be in competition with each other. Shared problems include, cashflow, trouble with landlords, the burden of paperwork, credit difficulties and bad debtors. On the question of landlords I have seen a self-employed architect who commanded slightly more weight than others, step in on behalf of a self-employed restaurateur to successfully negotiate with a landlord over a demand that £2000 of repairs be carried out on the premises by the tenant within a month. Often the new self-employed, united by their age and low status, unable to afford prestigious premises, find themselves operating in the same area in cheap workshop units, dilapidated warehouses or old shop fronts all in a run-down area of town - often one earmarked for re-development. The developers have sometimes been met by concerted resistance from unified groups who have only been thrown together by their common self-employed status - the flipside of the anti-Yuppie front emerging in London's docklands and elsewhere. This perceived common interest is emerging slowly, but remembering the old business maxim of "If you owe the bank five thousand, they've got you by the balls, but if you owe them five million, you've got **them** by the balls", would something like a credit strike be too fanciful to imagine? Or could the unfairly discredited idea of the credit union make a come-back, enabling people to be less dependent on the banks and massive financial institutions?

There is, however, a more significant effect in the growth of the self-employed; since there is a wide range of goods and services available and since many potential customers are in a position to provide reciprocal goods and services (added to which the opportunity of the advantages of certain transactions not appearing on the books both in terms of tax and the efficiency of less paperwork) many realise the advantages of direct exchange. In recent months I have provided printing free of money charge to many different people and in return have received free meals, drinks, telephones, furniture, car parts, car servicing, carpets, typing, vegetables and so on. This return to a form of barter is characterised by a number of encouraging aspects; although the parties usually have to absorb the actual cost of materials consumed in the labour process, there is very little attempt to match the exchange-value of the products exchanged and the more used one is to dealing in this way with a particular party and therefore the more trust there is - the less exchange-value is important; the other advantages outweigh any quibbling adjustment to gain and loss..A deal is struck that tends to match the desire of both parties for the service of the other. Moreover, both are more assured of providing and receiving the enthusiastic effort and the resulting quality in both ends of the bargain. Working under these conditions is a different experience from the normal business grind. The striking of the deal (even when the deal is implicit) involves far more attention to what the other party actually wants (rather than what you can get away with charging). The production throws forward dedication utterly absent from the "another day, another dollar" attitude (in which the exchange-value is implicit in the maxim). The (gift) exchange involves a hopeful anticipation that the other party will be thrilled by the effort and skill that is apparent in what you have given them and the receipt on your part involves a special sense of ownership missing from 'shop-bought' goods. Overall, what becomes evident is the social relation of the gift



No. 181. Folly Uppermost.

exchange, the thought and understanding of the other party as a particular human being and not a faceless consumer (see Here and Now No. 5 on the Gift) in other words trust where scepticism is usually the byword of business. This bartering-trade is, in an important way, *in opposition* to money-trade and the practices of accountancy and taxation are forced to struggle to maintain control of a situation where the threat (albeit somewhat empty) of exchange-value slipping away altogether looms large. Take the pricing up of goodwill as an asset for instance, or this from 'The VAT Guide':

22. Barter and part-exchange

If you supply services...or goods and receive other goods and services in full or part payment, two separate supplies take place...Tax must be accounted...How you work out the value of these supplies is explained in paragraph 16(c).

16(c) ...The tax value of the supply is its open market value...

or again

24. Gifts

(a) **General.** An article is a gift where the donor is not obliged to give it and the recipient is not obliged to give anything in return...If you make a gift of goods this is normally a taxable supply and VAT is due on the cost of the goods...You must remember that lending someone an item from your business...is a taxable supply.

Gifts under worth under £10.00 are VAT-free but 'must be given for business reasons and must not be part of a series or succession of gifts to the same person'. All of this refutes a fossilised Marxism which insists on the 'reactionary' character of self-employed people. In fact, these networks of mutual aid refer back to the struggles of independent artisans against industrialisation in 18th and 19th centuries. Perhaps the hostility directed against self-employment by the Left lies in the notion of Enterprise Culture, the examination of which I would like to conclude with.

The 1980s has seen the term 'Enterprise' reach ascendancy. It permeates both state and commercial propaganda. The term entrepreneur is increasingly coming to designate 'positivity' without any regard to the content of what is being done. Enterprise means 'initiative, imagination and flair', it legitimates new companies, new promotions and new wealth. The reason it can do so is because it hangs on the tenuous connection between the 'Enterprise Culture' and self-employment. Self-employment does have features of autonomy and self-management which people aspire towards, but such qualities are hard to find in the corporations of the Hanson Trust, British Telecom, the Stock Exchange, the Manpower Services Commission or is it 'The Enterprise Commission' now?

The rise and rise of enterprise correlates with the apparent transition from the epoch of **productive** capital (the age of 'industrialism' with all its associated ideologies and metaphors: instrumental reason, performance principle, rationality etc. what Baudrillard calls the

'energetic co-economic myth of labour', man versus nature etc.) to the age of pure **finance** and the hegemony of **money** capital over all forms of capital. In an age where the vast majority of 'capitalists' and capitalist functionaries cannot be said to be 'making' anything or apparently **DOING** anything of any apparent worth for anyone, the alibi of production lapses and a new mode of legitimization seems appropriate, which Enterprise fits. People shuffling numbers around in the money-market rackets are capable of being called 'entrepreneurs' because they are doing 'deals', making 'decisions', floating 'ventures' and 'handling' information (the central magic word of the epoch).

Finally, 'enterprise culture' plays a more strictly behavioural role - it challenges cultural resistance to commodification, and provides the rationale for a wholesale re-structuring of everyday life.

Enterprise culture and self-employment are only linked by malevolent design. The one does not mean the other, and driving a wedge between the two is one of the projects to challenge the 'Economic Movement', which neither succumbs to the taste for 'New Realism' nor marginalises itself on the farther shores of revolutionary purity.

212 Mediatic 2nd

(ingrained modeling)

Post-Modernism can make you blind.

POST-MODERNISM fools your brain.

When you first buy it, you may feel more alert, more confident, more sociable, more in control of your life.

In reality, of course, nothing has changed. But to your brain, the feeling seems real.

From Euphoria...

So naturally, you want to experience this feeling again. So you look for more POST-MODERNISM - and buy it.

Once more, you like the effect. You really get a kick out of buying POST-MODERNISM. It's a very clean high indeed. Only this time you notice you don't feel so good when you come down. You're confused, edgy, anxious, even depressed.

One of the things that makes POST-MODERNISM so dangerous, is that it compels you to keep on buying it. And as it comes in unlimited quantities, it's hard to stay away from it.

But if you keep experimenting with POST-MODERNISM, quite soon you may feel you need it just to function well. To perform better at work, to cope with

stress, to escape depression... or just to have a good time at art openings, premieres, parties, etc.

Like cocaine, POST-MODERNISM MAKES YOU TALK TOO MUCH AND THINK TOO LITTLE. You have difficulty concentrating and remembering. You feel aggressive and suspicious towards people. You don't want to eat, you can't sleep and your interest in sex is below zero.

To Paranoia...



And there's worse to come... You become paranoid. You may feel people are persecuting you. And you may have an intense fear that important art-critics may write POST-MODERNISM off before it pays off (which is bound to happen since POST-MODERNISM is simply bad art)

Before you know what's happening, you hear laughter nearby and a voice whispering: 'I've got you... I've got you now...' So many

people have been totally convinced that bugs were crawling on or out of their skin, that this P.M. hallucination has a nickname: the *pomo bugs*...

You may become violent. Even feel suicidal.

When POST-MODERNISM gets you really strung out, you may turn to alcohol, tranquilizers, even heroin... just to slow down.

If you saw your doctor now and he didn't know you were into POST-MODERNISM, he'd probably diagnose you as a manic-depressive (a *mani-depri*...).

To Psychosis...

Literally, you're crazy. But you know what's truly frightening? Despite everything that's happening to you, even now, you may still feel totally in control.

That's POST-MODERNISM talking. POST-MODERNISM really does make you blind to reality. And with what's known about it today, you probably have to be something else to start buying POST-MODERNISM in the first place.

To Bratwurst.

Dumbo.

Don't believe in PM, it doesn't believe in you.

Language, Truth and Violence

We received the article below by **Frank Dexter** during the summer. We are publishing it in *Here and Now* in the belief that the time has come for the issues it deals with to be more openly and honestly debated than they have been up until now.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A POLEMIC AGAINST A number of targets. It attacks the confusionism, self-delusion, and conformism endemic in the thinking of those who call themselves radical. It is directed particularly against the self-satisfying shibboleths and hyperbolic stereotypes which characterise talk about 'violence' and 'domination' within the Left. Pacifism, as one of the refuges of moral conscience today, is challenged for its fixation on **symbols** of violence. Feminist conceptions of 'masculinity' are called into question for reproducing an image of the 'Violence of Men' no less distorted than the State's conception of the 'Men of Violence'. Tentative suggestions are made towards more realistic approaches to violence, and an exploration of the psychology of power-relations is suggested, in order to provoke a serious debate on these serious issues.

Non-Violence and The Poverty of Self-Righteousness

Most people will recognise that violence of various sorts is sometimes pretty much inevitable - a 'fact of life' even - so that it might as well be regarded as natural. Such a view is anathema to people who define themselves, accordingly, as pacifists. Pacifism is defined by its position of repudiation of violence in any shape or form as a fundamental moral principle. Such an emphatic position - self-consciously at variance with what is assumed to be the normal course of human affairs - might seem to require a clear definition of what exactly 'violence' consists in and why it arises, the different forms of violence and the moral distinctions pertinent to such variations. But on the contrary, the virtuosos of non-violence distinguish themselves above all by their **reluctance** to define precisely what it is they are renouncing. One distinction which seems absolutely crucial to any analysis of the social causes of violence - the distinction between **personal** (or interpersonal) violence and the institutionally-organised forms of violence exemplified by warfare, militarism and the almost 'industrialised' mayhem of technological weaponry - seems to be systematically glossed over by contemporary pacifist discourse, which tends rather to reduce the latter to the former, as if it were merely an outgrowth of it. The most abhorrent aspects of the latter - its very **impersonal** character - are distorted by a psychologistic language whereby nuclear weapons are treated as "Toys for the Boys".

There are, of course, two forms of pacifism: what one might call 'strong' pacifism, (that is, the position of those who **sincerely** believe that all forms of violence are evil and must be renounced), and, on the other, a 'weak' pacifism - arguably dominant on the Left now - which may be characterised as a **selective** or even **hypocritical** posture on violence. This is the posture of vociferous moral outrage against 'violence' in general without explicit commitment to the pacifist position. This would deserve the term hypocritical in the peculiar sense that it inverts the usual contradictory relation between principle and practice: hypocrisy normally means espousing a general principle but not obeying it in one's personal life. Left hypocrisy on violence consists, on the contrary, in a kind of flamboyant display of outrage against the very things which are, under different names, recognised as 'normal' and 'inevitable'. It is a kind of doublethink in which one



"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean. Neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "who is to be master. That is all."

Lewis Carroll, *Through the looking glass*

keeps one's options open by formulating moral principles in such a form that one might not risk having to apply them. This is illustrated by the treatment of **war** as intrinsically abhorrent, as itself a moral evil, whilst refusing to articulate the principles whereby moral conduct **within** war situations might be examined. This is particularly relevant in the world today, where the line between 'war' and 'peace' is not so clear (neither the Malvinas conflict nor the Irish war are legally defined as wars), and it is extremely dangerous to talk as if once a 'war' is in force, moral rules do not apply. Those old enough to remember the My Lai massacre in Vietnam should be reminded of the absurdity whereby opponents of the war were joined with supporters of it in a shared conviction that the perpetrators of that atrocity were

innocent of any 'war crime'. If war itself is a crime, the notion of a 'war crime' loses its force and presumably those who deliberately kill civilians are **no worse** than those who do not. The logic of positing war as a threshold beyond which moral rules become inoperative (exemplified by the Left refusal to think through such rules) is exactly the logic of Colonel Kurtz and the BAMN (By any means necessary) school of thought, which, as we know, has its left-wing versions too.

Let me illustrate. Everyone on the Left will say they are against war, especially nuclear war; anybody you care to ask will willingly say they would never, under any conceivable circumstances, use nuclear weapons: because nuclear war is 'unthinkable' (an interesting expression: it means 'I don't want to think about it': a common attitude, but pacifists nevertheless **talk** prolifically about that which they don't wish to **think**). What should we make of this generous renunciation of annihilation? Not much. None of us will ever be in a position to use such things therefore it is the most stupid form of fantasy to 'renounce' something one will never conceivably be able to do and to imagine one is thereby making a **moral** decision. Hypothetical discussions about what you would do if...are utterly useless; the hypothetical circumstances in this case are guaranteed never to be tested, so whatever is said is irrelevant as an indication of a moral percept.

This attitude of renunciation is, however, profoundly symbolic of the nature of Left thinking about war and violence: its essence is the taking up of an emphatic position **against** something which has absolutely no bearing upon one's own actual behaviour. People who know they will never be called upon to make 'military' decisions can sweep away the entire reality of war in a catchphrase or two. Now, I'm not suggesting that people **should** take up positions on military questions like the use of nuclear weapons. That would be fantasy of the familiar sort (what would 'we' do if 'we' were in command of the state?) We should forget such scenarios; my concern is with the fact that people avoid taking up the immediate moral issues which **do** matter in practice.

People who take the 'strong' pacifist position are those who not only commit themselves against **war** but commit themselves to what they call **NON-VIOLENCE** in their own everyday lives. This position would seem to be far better than the mealy-mouthed hypocrisies of the majority of the Left (which is typified by the tendency to denounce the 'militarism' of certain regimes in the world, whilst applauding the liberation struggles of those who will form such regimes when they win). In fact, however, the pacifist position is arguable worse than the ordinary hypocritical position because it adds to the irresponsibility of the former (which knows it will never be called upon to act) the determination to **refuse** to act. A pacifist is someone who is a good deal braver than the average peace-movement supporter. The bulk of the membership of the peace movement know that they have nothing to fear by taking their stand against the war machine. The real pacifists, however, have to go out of their way to produce situations where they can confirm to themselves the virtue of their moral position. A pacifist is a trouble-maker because s/he is determined to make the point that pacifism is a hard position to sustain and therefore one only an elect minority can live by.

One is entitled to ask what is this 'PEACE' about which pacifists speak so much? In what way does it differ from the ordinary revulsion against violence and the fear of war which everyone feels? For a start, it seems to come from a utopian, even religious, vision of an end of **conflict**: it is a negative doctrine (pacifism as 'non' violence) struggling against something which it believes to be natural and normal nevertheless, and therefore requires conscious and continual engagement: a permanent revolution against a drive-to-destruction which is believed to be ever-present. But instead of taking the view that violence is an ever-present potential in human life which **therefore requires social arrangements to control and regulate it** (a theory which leads in the direction of a social and political philosophy about how society should organise its coercive and

'civilising' mechanisms in a better way than the modern state has done), the pacifist shoots off into a kind of asceticism of the psyche: the imagined 'will' to violence must be **exorcised** - burnt out of the human heart. This spiritual distortion of an essentially 'political' question can only lead to a kind of moralistic anorexia: renunciation, sacrifice, denial, ...of what? of one's own evil 'desires'. Not only is this useless and self-indulgent, it reveals the psychological connections between pacifism and christian monasticism. The age-old struggle to tame the flesh reappears today in the pointless introverted interrogation of a (quite absurd) notion of a 'will-to-violence'. A different, and more mundane and realistic, conceptualisation of violence and how it occurs is blocked off by this insistence on getting at its supposed 'roots'. To try to tackle the very real problems of human violence by this spiritual self-sacrifice (turning inwards) is like trying to empty the Pacific Ocean with a tea-spoon.

If pacifism reduces war to 'violence' and converts the problems of political philosophy into a pursuit of moral purity, one must not for a moment imagine that pacifists have renounced **hatred**. They have refined it into its essence: the conception that the entire human race has been wrong, deceived and brainwashed into violating the proper order of things is a pretty contemptuous view of humanity. Pacifists must believe that everyone except themselves is either evil or weak or even spiritually unhealthy insofar as they do not realise the need to purge violence from their souls and persist in the practice of fighting one another. Merely pragmatic solutions to the real and **particular** problems of violence in all the **diversity of forms** in which it exists clearly do not capture the imagination and support of pacifists who think in terms of a unitary 'evil'. They naturally prefer symbolic gestures which dramatically highlight the contrast between the 'normal' violence that exists and their own repudiation of it. Pacifists have not, it seems, mobilised to capture police committees or neighbourhood watch schemes; they aren't vociferous about alcohol advertising, or any of the myriad other matters that make up the bulk of everyday violence. They prefer to throng around missile sites and write letters about toy guns - symbolic targets because it is indeed **symbols** of a **concept** of violence which matter more to them than the real violences that hurt real people now. But the problem with symbols is that they 'stand for' sometimes quite strange things. The problem with pacifists is that they're always 'standing for' something.

Indeed the real seems to be of less concern than the symbolic even among the best thinkers on behalf of peace. Consider the following miasma of word-associations:

*"All power rests with the pure, knowing, initiating subject: Descartes' Cogito **cum** capitalist entrepreneur **cum** technocrat. This party was necessarily a white male. His psychology is that of the Ego: mental technocracy" (Joel Kovel 'Theses on Technocracy' Telos 54 1982/3)*

Five fallacious clichés in as many lines. And from this violation of logic can one grasp the logic of violence? I will not insult the reader's intelligence by spelling out the phantasmagoric condensations and displacements at work in this kind of "Free (but rigidly deterministic) Association" (and this from a psychoanalyst too). Unfortunately it is far from untypical among 'post-critical' intellectuals.



No. 80. Violence Refuted.

Hatred

This is a word whose role is interesting in discussions of violence. It is perhaps hatred rather than violence as such which pacifism directs itself against. At least this would explain the tendency to try to search and destroy the roots of violence by turning attention inwards rather than outwards. Certainly it seems true that hatefulness, spite and bitterness are flourishing today, at least in England; everybody hates something and many people are hated by someone or other; one is lucky if one can feel sure of being unhated these days. Just think about the mentality at work in the following view of the Greenham women, in the words of a resident of Newbury:

We are as disgusted and repelled by their presence as they are by the arrival of Cruise. At least Cruise is clean.
(quoted in Lynchcombe **At least Cruise is Clean** p. 27)

One cannot even begin to probe these strange symbolic associations around ideas of dirt and contamination unless one is prepared to accept that they may play some part in one's own thinking, and are not just an expression of the bigotry of those 'others', (here: the nasty, narrow-minded petty bourgeoisie); or to allow that maybe at least some of the Greenham women were quite deliberately, for reasons of their own, concerned to "violate" the codes of 'decency', in order to provoke just such a response. If there is any truth in this, then the peace movement is not entirely to be taken at face value in its claim to be trying to create a general popular movement. The desire to shock the respectable citizenry and to display one's 'deviance' seems to suggest a deeper complicity with the middle class norms whose inversion one is trying to demonstrate. Here, as elsewhere, may be another instance of fighting but not seriously wanting to win. I consider some of the logic of hatred later, (see sections on CONVENTIONALISM and RESENTMENT), but a few comments seem pertinent here to distinguish hatred from conflict as such.

Hatred, contrary to pacifist theory, is not synonymous with enmity (even though words like 'hostility' - from Latin 'hostis': enemy - connect the objective fact of antagonism with the sentiments which may or may not characterise relations between enemies). There are many kinds of practical conflicts where personal hatreds are not the central determinant and only arise as a secondary embellishment. It is perfectly normal for conflict to be conducted without the antagonists losing respect for one another's rights or having any desire to cause personal suffering. It is probably true to say that conflicts are conducted all the more successfully the less they are complicated by such emotionally disorienting things as hatred.

Warfare between states has evolved from the relatively rule-governed conflicts between military castes of the early modern period to the 20th century forms of impersonal institutionalised destructiveness typified by aerial bombing of civilians. With the growth of 'Total War' (beginning with the French Revolutionary Wars), entire populations have had to be mobilised by **propaganda** into 'hatreds' for their supposed 'enemies'; but the actual causes of the wars have always been different from the lurid demonizations of the 'enemy' required to whip up popular support for the wars. Among the officer classes of hostile nations, of course, a modicum of the old 'civilised' respect has remained, even though the populations at large have been trained to see each other in dehumanized terms. There are still, however, important variations in the ways wars may be conducted. War is not tantamount to the unleashing of unregulated violence and the thing entirely, which happens to have been harnessed as an element in the cultural logistics of the modern state, which is driven by quite different considerations.

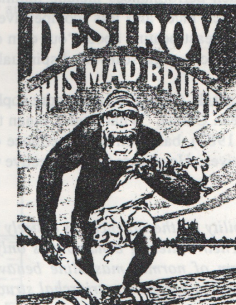
Hatred needs an object. Propaganda shows how these objects can be transferred by psychological techniques; it remains an important question how far people may be made to hate anything, and what kinds of influence are required in order to do so.

In my view, hatred is an unequivocally bad thing. It has no redeeming virtue of any kind. It can never even be an instrumental good, for the simple reason that it is, as they say, a **blinding** force. It is a surrender of control over one's perceptual world. Hatred consists in a decision to invest **everything** in an attitude from which there can be **no turning back**. It is extremely difficult to de-hate something or somebody whom one has decided to hate.

Despite various (increasingly unconvincing) disavowals, a definite hatred towards 'men' does play a part in certain currents of feminism: repulsion from men is not even clearly distinguishable from moral indignation against gender injustice or masculine domination, since these are reciprocally reinforcing. General categories like 'men' are, however, derived from particulars, and yet such generalizations are **irreversible**, allowing of not exemptions: any particular man can serve as an exemplification of the generality, whose construction is immune from re-examination.

Hatreds, properly speaking, are personal; hence for a **general** object to be hated it has to be 'personified' (thus the way racial stereotypes figure as imaginary **individuals**: 'The' Jew (singular); 'The' Black Man etc). Hatreds may not always get consummated in torture and murder, but they have that function, as their 'final cause' (to 'hate' means to want-to-hurt). Hate can sometimes achieve sublimation in a **symbolic** annihilation of the object. But this is a ritual of denial and self-deception. People who claim to have transcended a hatred by the severing of all contact (a kind of symbolic or surrogate murder; like burning letters) are kidding themselves. Fickle hatreds, and even some enduring ones, can wear off, of course; it doesn't seem that they can be consciously renounced any more than drugs can.

Hatred is **disabling** for this reason: hating someone or something is to be controlled by it, to have one's behaviour almost **directed** by what one hates.



Aggression - The Enemy Within ?

The fact that hatred is located at the psychological level is what makes it seem that the 'roots' of violence are to be found within the individual. But if, as I've been suggesting, not all violence originates from such passions, this is not necessarily a fruitful way to conceptualise it.

There has developed over the last decade or so a proliferation of discourse which reinforces this psychologisation of violence; it is the discourse about 'aggression': poisted as a distinctively **male** characteristic and increasingly implicated as the prime 'cause' of violence. The two main influences which have spread this way of thinking are the - otherwise quite antagonistic - ideologies of Darwinism and Feminism. Since the early 1970s, with the writings of Robert Ardrey and Desmond Morris, the biologicistic language of ethology

and socio-biology has enforced an association between 'maleness' and 'aggression' which has been easily assimilated at the popular level into feminist categories of 'male domination' (patriarchy) and 'male violence', despite the fundamentally different theoretical bases and political orientations of the two ideologies. That the former is an inherently reactionary discourse intended to legitimise social institutions and practices which it wants to represent as 'natural', while the latter is a consciously radical discourse meant to challenge what it sees as 'deep-rooted' structures of social power hasn't prevented the two languages converging.

As a result of this talk about 'deep-rooted' inclinations and the general individualizing treatment of social relations, there has grown up in certain quarters a view of 'masculinity' as itself a psychopathological formation. Quite a number of men have undergone various forms of self-examination in response to these charges.

The ultimate benefits that may have been gained remain in doubt, but the fact is that the major product of these processes has been a massive amount of **talking and writing** about 'maleness' in a kind of confessional mode. There has been cultivated a sort of need to display (and disavow) misogyny and other sins, that is almost masochistic in its humble acceptance of guilt.

All kinds of seemingly innocuous behaviours become "further offences to be taken into consideration" by the men-against-sexism tribunals. A few years ago, Carl Gardener wrote in the *New Statesman* a piece about men "in the grip of a sordid obsession, consumed by an overwhelming need to prove himself again and again" (he was actually referring to marathon running). It is surely not unreasonable to be skeptical about how discovering some psychological connection between such performance-compulsion and masculinity actually is supposed to contribute to improving the position of women in society. Talking-seriously-to-each-other-about-ourselves seems to be an equally 'sordid obsession' with more than a hint of self-indulgence to it, especially when accompanied by obsequious panderings towards feminism. Women can be forgiven for not always responding approvingly when such performances include familiar patronising references to how much nicer and less 'competitive' women are. Indulging this sort of breast-beating about "our own emotional and personal inadequacies" can suggest inverted spiritual boastfulness.

On a rather different track, and a good deal more sophisticated, is a recent account by Sean Cathie, 'What does it mean to be a man?' (*Free Associations* 1987), based on his experience of counselling men who beat their wives. He reports the perspective which informs the project as being:

...responsibility for the violence lies entirely with the men. Their battering behaviour is only an extreme form of normal masculine behaviour and is related to society's patriarchal structure and men's expectations that they should be dominant. One answer that was often proposed to counter this was that boys should be socialized in the same way that girls traditionally are, that is to be nurturing... (p.8)

His work with some of these men leads him to question some of this, particularly the assumption that their violence expresses dominance: "far from being strong and confident exercisers of authority, the men I met who had beaten their wives seemed deeply threatened and impotent". He goes on to raise doubts about the proposals for non-differential socialization, suggesting that masculinity as such may not altogether be an unmitigated evil. For the purpose of the present argument, however, I would say that his discussions doesn't go nearly far enough in calling into question the associations between masculinity, dominance and violence. A lot obviously depends on what counts as 'dominance'; but I don't see anything sexist in acknowledging that a desire for domination may be found in women as

much as in men. To recognise this, and to explore the different forms of such a will-to-power over others, is not at all inconsistent with a commitment to radical social policies to undermine the social structures which expose women to the violence of men.

But, even in Cathie's thoughtful contribution, there still lurks the same language: the psychospeak of **management**. We are enjoined to learn "how to handle" our emotions, and to "come to terms" with our feelings; emotions become, in this language, an object of mental **labour** (as in phrases like "men must **work on** their emotions" etc). This kind of pseudo-technical jargon is extruded from the proliferating therapy-professions, for whom human misery (both real and imaginary) is indeed a labour-process (and a source of income).

The most striking thing about this language is its suffocating **earnestness**; like all the technical terminology of the social and human sciences it is based on the stripping down of language to a stilted wooden 'Mister-Man' level of complexity in which only one analytical element can be dealt with at any one time. There is no humour in this world (the greatest dissolver of anger) except for the cynical self-mockery of the professionals which serves to reassure themselves of their sophistication). There is no **tragedy** (only 'problems': as if the grief of bereavement, for example, were merely a 'problem' - of the same ontological order as a broken washing machine). This technicalization represents the 'caring' professions' subordination of life to their own impoverished terms: the part presuming to talk about the whole.

The earnestness and cloying 'sensitivity' (as embodied in lying words like 'caring') betrays all the signs which you don't have to read Nietzsche to be able to recognise as the birthmark of **Protestant Christianity**...the language may have become secularised and coloured by technological metaphors, but it is the language of sin, faith, inner torment, repression, bearing witness, guilt, salvation etc...it is the Pilgrim's Progress of Homo Psychologicus.

But the most important feature of the use of this language is its **manipulative** character. Nietzsche's own utterly masculinist critique of Christianity as the ideology of the weak, entirely fails to get to grips with the massively **powerful** project of this humanistic psychobabble. It is a tool of manipulation by seduction, by enveloping the mind in a net of invisible, intangible **representations**. It isn't 'conscience' (as Nietzsche in his desperation imagined) so much as an apparatus of directly **social** control. Conscience, if anything represents an internal regulation by which people inhibit and constrain their own behaviour. This sort of thing is anathema in this 'liberated' age. In the name of such 'liberation' the degree of sheer conformism is intensified.

The urge to therapeutise, to 'help', to 'get people to talk' is no less a will to power than the desire to understand, explain, define or clarify. The fact that the language of humanistic psychology eschews notions of truth and falsehood and criticism doesn't make it any less repressive than approaches which aren't so embarrassed about trying to be 'rational'.

The **control** exercised in the 'soft' psychologies of counselling etc is simply more covert and operates along insidious displacements which remove the claims to 'expertise' from being open to challenge. Getting people to talk about their feelings is a skill which involves training and this training necessarily involves learning to master one's own feelings. This is already a form of **power** which elementary justice demands be checked by something more substantial than an 'ethical' code operated by and in the interests of those who make their living out of 'helping' people in this dubious project.

Everyone uses the word 'aggression' and the word is invariably used on the Left as a derogatory term. But what **does** it actually mean?

To some people, the appropriateness of the word 'aggression' would depend on the existence of a manifestly hostile attitude, and probably also some physical gestures or movements. To others, the word is appropriate even in the absence of such things, and would be applicable

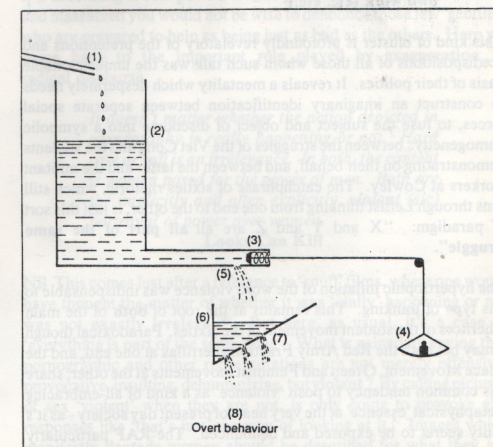
to any behaviour which is excessively emphatic (eg. tone and volume of voice) or designed to get one's own way in an argument (or even the behaviour of **having** an argument); things which some might call simply 'assertiveness' might be called 'aggressive' by others. The use of particular words might be described as 'aggressive' ...thus to call someone an 'aggressive' person might in some contexts be construed as itself 'aggressive', since the term can carry quite offensive connotations. One cannot simply legislate on the proper uses of these words, though this itself is an assertion that will not stop arguments about words. Context is all, and we cannot 'step outside' to settle the matter in any of the senses of the phrase.

It may even be that the images which go with words (as against the kind of verbal definitions that might achieve the consistency demanded by lawyers, logicians and computers) are inescapably bound to unconscious - even intractably irrational, emotion-laden, meanings. The word 'aggression' might be thought of as **necessarily** associated with 'men' insofar as the word is most frequently used about men. But truth is achieved by tautology here: the English language always has two words for the same thing, so that a derogatory one can be used to describe 'other' people (as in 'I am firm, you are stubborn' etc). A lot of sneering about the 'male ego' for example might lead one to think that only men had them: in which case, one might ask what it is in women that is 'offended' when men make patronising sexist assumptions.

Nowadays it seems to be accepted as a matter of fact that men and women inhabit incommensurable mental worlds: essential differences are all the rage. For centuries men have written of things 'female' with an obsessiveness and apparent determination to insist on the essential differentness of the sexes that it is not without a nice irony that one of the most common male whinges about recent feminist writing is to complain of the positing of an 'essentialist' conception of male and female; and, to add insult to injury, to claim to be defending a 'universalism' which is clearly not so **obviously** universal since it requires men to be its natural defenders. Women, presumably cannot be trusted to judge the 'logical' consequences of pushing an idea so far as to call into question the very foundations of reason, etc. 'Don't you realise...' men say. The steady influence of the male instinct for the whole picture has to be brought into play to correct for the excesses of the female imagination when it attempts to try its hand at logic without experience of the 'rules' of which men remain the guardians. These little hypocrisies of men, however, are more than just rhetorical evasions; they are **defences** against something. If it is proper to refer to defensiveness, then it is necessary to recognise there is an **attack** taking place (attack means assault means aggression). Indeed it makes sense to admit at last there is a war of some kind going on, even though there may be different views about what the 'sides' are. It really isn't very honest to complain that those you treat as enemies behave accordingly, having the gall to try to 'defend' themselves. As will be intimated later on when dealing with Leftist habits, there is a difference between fighting a war and acting as a provocateur: the former implies at least being ready for the consequences of unleashing a struggle, and involves **wanting to win**; the latter only goes as far as a symbolic gesture of 'revealing' the latent violence of those whom one is not in the least prepared to fight. To anticipate the argument to follow, let me illustrate 'provocation' in the following terms. When one challenges someone or 'protests' against something, one is engaged in **communication**. If you **accuse** somebody to their face, you are inciting a response which you know is going to be an 'escalation' or at the very least to be an emotional reaction. To contribute to the production of such a response and then disown personal responsibility for having produced it is what can be called 'dishonest'; it can also be quite dangerous. If you snarl at a dog it may bite you. Undoubtedly all dogs have an innate capacity to bite but such provocative tactics do not 'prove' the essential aggressivity of dogs, so much as they demonstrate the stupidity of such a mode of proof for a proposition one might well have taken on trust.

It appears something of a paradox that in these days when 'violence', 'aggression' and 'masculinity' are objects of denunciation (each being accused of complicity with the others), the favourite Leftist words are words like 'struggle' and 'strategy'. The former is an awkward English word most frequently used to render the more precise continental terms, 'lutte' and 'kampf'. The latter unambiguously suggests **fighting** (with all its implications of recognisable enemies and a clear identification of the issues at stake). The English word is weak: you struggle; to get into tight jeans; the word even **sounds** like 'wriggle'. 'Strategy' likewise literally refers to warfare (from the Greek 'stratos' = army); it's a word with necessarily implies a war between organised forces whose movements can be controlled by respective command centres. It's perfectly normal for words to have their meanings changed but this fashionable word 'strategy' **makes no sense** outside a situation corresponding to a 'military' engagement between armies or other forces both internally and externally structured for 'warlike' encounters. (see Paul Virilio & Sylvère Lotringer **Pure War** for an exhaustive application of the military metaphor: in Virilio's scheme, it might more appropriate for contemporary social struggles to be conceptualised in terms of **tactics** rather than **strategies**). The word strategy is of course only used as a fancy word for policy or method (educationalists talk about 'teaching strategies' of all things: who's the enemy?) No doubt these words enable people in desk-bound jobs to imagine themselves engaged in serious combat about matters of world-historical moment; the most one can say is that there is undoubtedly a 'realpolitik'. The irony remains, however: why is this word favoured by those who explicitly renounce the aggressivity and masculinism of conventional politics? What sense does it make to 'combat' the prevalence of militaristic thinking? Why furthermore, has the ascendancy of this notion of 'strategy' (in the titles of books, papers, conferences, 'anti-racist strategies' etc) apparently coincided with the **decline and disarray** of the Left?

The gendering of words is not even the only thing that is involved in preventing understanding between men and women. Words play vicious games with each other: when assertion becomes aggression is not something that the words will necessarily allow people to decide for themselves. And when people resort to the word 'violence' in the course of their arguments, language itself can escalate the situation.



Psychological plumbing: Lorenz's model of aggression has had enormous influence. He argued that energy for aggressive behaviour builds up inside an animal (1, 2) creating pressure on a "piston" (3). Weights in the pan (4) represent a "sign stimulus". Eventually the energy is released (5, 6, 7) as fighting

II THE POLITICS OF HYPERBOLE

The New Left: Agitate and Exaggerate

The language of violence is inseparable from the rhetoric of accusation. It is customary for those who are concerned with criticising the euphemistic language of official talk about war [footnote: from Marcuse to Nukespeak (ed. Crispin Aubrey) etc] to draw a polite veil over the opposite tendency - that of hyperbolic clichés which try to represent, say, all 'conflict' as 'violence', or (and we shall come to this) all 'criticism' as 'aggression' etc. There is a pattern in these elisions - it involves the attempt to construct imaginary essential unities, to obscure moral distinctions, and to gloss immediate realities by describing them in a language drawn from extreme cases which are exploited for their symbolic value.

Violence, as I understand it, refers to actions that (intentionally or otherwise) cause real physical pain and/or damage. (Pain being a function of all sensate beings, it seems obvious that this applies without distinction to animals as well as humans: experiments on animals are, from my point of view, instances of violence, and even those who would make a moral distinction around this should surely accept the definition at least). That would be what the word literally means, and any metaphorical uses depend upon this literal meaning for their rhetorical efficacy. The New Left, however, from its very inception, has virtually committed itself to a policy of muddying this issue of metaphor. The veritable hallmark of New Leftspeak is precisely the inflated use of words like violence to obscure rational distinctions of this kind, and to assert, wherever possible, that everything is "all part of the same thing".

In 1968, for example, at the time of the anti-Vietnam war protests, we find the following exemplary declaration:

This is a new type of demonstration. It stems from an increasing recognition that violence is inherent in Western capitalist societies..... Violence is proclaimed (sic) by a situation where power is unequally distributed and decisions are made by a minority 'up there' and passed down through authority....There is violence in the alienation of worker from his own work (etc. etc.)

This kind of bluster is profoundly revelatory of the pretensions and predispositions of all those whom such talk was the unquestionable basis of their politics. It reveals a mentality which desperately needs to construct an imaginary identification between separate social forces, to fuse the subject and object of discourse into a symbolic homogeneity: between the struggles of the Viet Cong and the students demonstrating on their behalf, and between the latter and the militant workers at Cowley. The catchphrase of sixties rhetoric, which still runs through Leftist thinking from one end to the other, is just this sort of paradigm: "X and Y and Z are all part of the same struggle".

The hypertrophic inflation of the word violence was indispensable to this type of thinking. This remains at the root of both of the main inheritors of the student movement of the sixties. Paradoxical though it may be, both the Red Army Fraction guerrillas at one end, and the Peace Movement, Green and Feminist movements at the other, share this common tendency to posit 'violence' as a kind of all-embracing metaphysical 'essence' at the very heart of present day society - as it's guilty secret to be exposed and denounced. The RAF particularly specialised in this sort of talk (Horst Mahler once in an interview smugly pointed to his own cigarette calmly informing us that smoking too was part of the routine violence of capitalist society), with the obvious intention of thereby claiming legitimacy for killing people. But equally the Peace/Green/Feminist movements adopt the same view of violence as intrinsic to the everyday life of 'Western'/'Industrial'/'Patriarchal' society (we can leave aside the fact that

these are actually quite different conceptualisations of the form of society - this sort of conflation by association-of-ideas is typical of those for whom a 'theory' means having a name to sum up everything you're against).

Victimism: The Trivialization of Oppression

Twenty five years ago, Russell Jacoby, ('The Politics of Subjectivity' *New Left Review* 79) bemoaned the debasement of critical categories consequent upon their psychologisation:

The depletion of political concepts in favour of psychological and subjective ones is a by-product of the scramble for the remnants of human experience. Yet the subjectivisation of objective concepts is not the repudiation of the loss of human experience, but forms part of its prehistory. The reduction of the Marxist theory of alienation to a subjective state by bourgeois sociologists has its counterpart on the left in the reduction of oppression to a whim of the individual. Alienation becomes a headache and oppression annoyance. 'I'm oppressed' announces someone, and that's that.

Today, of course, being oppressed, whilst still spoken of this way, with the same matter-of-factness as being depressed, is a point of honour. A tacit consensus has emerged to try to buttress the moral exchange-value of everyone's diverse oppressions without allowing a price-war to put the relative value of any of these claims to the test. Put simply, the word has become so devalued that nobody dare cash it in and that's why it is asserted so forcefully that 'different oppressions cannot be measured and compared'. Invidious comparisons are avoided by the simple expedient of accepting all statements at their face-value. Being 'oppressed' means, in effect, being able to successfully get away with interaction sequences premised upon the claim. Thus the teacher is oppressed by the students, the social worker by the clients, the boss by the employees etc. One of the most striking features of this situation is the preoccupation with 'offensive' language. The Left today has succumbed to the ghost of Mrs Grundy: at every moment, as in a Victorian schoolroom, one must mind one's language, so as to avoid 'offending' anyone's sensitivities. When legitimate concern to show the same respect to so-called sexual minorities as one would show to anyone else becomes a contortion demanded by hypersensitive egos one is led to suspect it is pretensions rather than self-esteem that are being pandered to. Nowhere is this more evident than in concepts like 'homophobia': hatred and contempt for gays is not based on fear but desire for sameness (literally: 'homo-philia') it is sheer self-aggrandisement to imagine that it is.

Since so much is at stake in the status of being oppressed, it is important to examine the process by which this strange moral investment works. The precondition for its success is, I suggest, the power of the metaphor already outlined. The consequence (the 'cost', if you like) is, in turn, nothing less than the corruption of political language and, more seriously, a situation in which too many people have a vested interest in representing their own oppression as eternal. Let me try to explain:

The trivialization of the word oppression works by the establishment of a metaphorical identity between an image invoked of those who are demonstrably suffering on the one hand and a situation where the claim to oppression depends upon the application of that image on the other. This is not all a matter of 'degrees' of oppression, as is usually (and significantly) supposed: it is a matter of symbolism. It is not, in other words, a matter of a "more" oppressive situation providing the language for describing a "less" oppressive one: it is a process whereby one situation requires analogies in order to be construed as 'oppression' in the first place.

The Left has always been dependent on the idea of victimhood. Originally the ideal victims were 'Others' (preferably far enough away for their voices to require translation). Since the sixties, this rather patronising disposition, by which the oppressed were spoken **about** by those concerned **on their behalf** (a discourse which persists in the Welfare State and in the recurrent moral panics about children) has been displaced by one in which it is one's **own** suffering which takes precedence. But this reproduces the same **form of language**. It works like this: instead of finding a language which directly describes one's suffering, one applies the whole ready-made jargon of 'oppression', 'exploitation', 'liberation' as a cover, hoping that nobody will notice the metaphorical connections by which one has appropriated other people's realities to cover oneself....

...Thus the Women's Movement in the USA at the end of the 60s took over **in toto** the vocabulary of the Black Movement, passing it on in turn to the Gay Movement...

Now, the politics of victimism is complex and easily misrepresented. It has little to do with **masochism** with which it is sometimes confused. [Vivien Johnson 'A Note on Masochism and the Women's Refuge Movement' **Working Papers** 1977: is actually about the problems of exploiting the ideology of victimhood, and the word masochism is entirely inappropriate]

Masochism, properly so-called, is the pleasure of **submission**: of a passivity voluntarily adopted towards another person or thing; in almost every respect it is the formal **opposite** of the victimism rife on the Left. The symbolism of masochistic pleasure is not difficult to decipher: the 'pain' endured in masochism is itself but a symbol; in its most extreme developments it is **humiliation** which is what the pain 'represents'. **Victimism on every point is the exact reverse of such pathology**. Masochism is desire **really** affixed to symbols; victimism is a purely symbolic attachment to something real enough. (crucial to this argument is the existence of **real victims**: let no-one accuse me of forgetting the reality of oppression). People who are determined to insist upon their status as victims and provoke continually the conditions in which this can be demonstrated (and even construct interests dependent upon nothing-ever-changing) are not in the slightest driven by any 'pleasure' in the fact. The masochist is quite conscious of what he/she wants. The victimist is a 'split' subject in this respect: the logic of the position cannot entirely be conscious; and, far from 'passivity; being the desire, the victimist is generally an **activist**: he/she always wants to be the master of the situation.

It is power around which victimism revolves, not sexuality.

I eat pain, gobbling it like chocolate until I am bloated with repugnance and self-loathing. Oh, but the power! Swollen as I am, glutted and battered as I am, I am never more powerful than at this moment - when he stands over me with that fire in his eyes. What do I care if it is the fire of revulsion, of hatred and anger and rage? I care only that it is I who ignited that fire. I am the chosen one, the sacrifice.

(New Internationalist)

This imaginary voice speaks not the psychology of desire but the politics of suffering. The taboo on voicing this logic arises not from the rational fear of 'implicating the (real) victim' but from the anxiety lest the surplus **beneficiaries** be brought to view. For it remains a largely unspoken fact that one real misery can, through the economy of metaphor, sustain a dozen vicarious interests. The quotation above, it needs hardly be added, illustrates victimism, not masochism. A later phrase clinches it:

Oh, the joy of being so **wronged**!

The masochist wants to be **punished**, not wronged, and this desire to be wronged is no desire at all, but a need, and one which springs not from within the psyche but from the profane world of the 'system of

needs' - from society and the calculus of advantages. We all know the everyday logic by which people make martyrs of themselves: sacrifices voluntarily undertaken only in order to claim moral superiority and inflict punitive demands later. It is indeed better to give than to receive, and even better to suffer.

The need to represent oneself as victim can be seen most vividly in the classic case of the Jews, and the propaganda of Zionism has played this card relentlessly for the last forty years. By and large the Black Movement and the Women's movement have refrained from this fatal strategy. The device is however, virtually mandatory for professionals engaged in the micropolitics of 'positions' - because it works so well against white liberals with bad faith and males whose sycophancy can indeed be called masochism.

By making oppression pay, so to speak, as the in-itself and for-itself of one's being, one takes on the role of living **stand-in** for a whole **category** of victims. Thus the Zionist theory of history has to portray the Jews as History's central victims - as if hatred and persecution of the Jews were the unity of the grand narrative of 'Western History' (this is explicit in George Steiner's ramblings): ethnocentrism gone mad; and as if Nazism, for example, were not more than its logical realization (with the result that the ghastly TV show 'Holocaust' never even mentioned Communism!). The logic is that of purest projection: seeing the Jewish people as the subject of history requires that 'Gentiles' be imagined to see it that way too. The reflection, of course, is that Zionism represents itself as the essence of Jewishness. Anti-Zionism means anti-semitism. We've all seen this sort of thing: you criticise me, therefore you are attacking the whole collectivity I'm purporting to represent (but whose voice I am simply usurping). Fill in your own examples....

That Jews really have been massacred (and we can do with being reminded of this) in no way entitles one to treat Zionist fallacies with kid-gloves for fear of lending comfort to the real anti-semites. Yet just this polite silence reigned for thirty years while Zionism secured its power. One might have thought the **reality** of the horrors so shamelessly exploited by Zionism would heighten the obscenity of this attempt to put one kind of racism off-limits for criticism.

This deployment of moral blackmail to the point of (simulated) paranoia depends, paradoxically, upon the movement whose ideology it is ascending to real power. While you really are being persecuted and massacred you would not be wise to denounce those few 'gentiles' who are prepared to help as being just as bad as the others. Here we come back to the important role played by **exaggeration** in radical discourse.

*It doesn't matter whether the action depicted in pornography is really happening or not. Hard core or soft is an irrelevance. In both, the content is women posed for the power of men. Both are the implicitly and often explicitly, **violent** (sic) portrayal of power over women.*

Looks Can Kill

NB This comes just after a reference to 'snuff' films, where one would have thought the matter of whether it was 'really' happening or not was not exactly **irrelevant**. But here, as usual, it's a case of 'everything is part of the same thing'. What is gained by saying that pornographic and other representations are not merely offensive, provocative, insulting, dehumanizing, but **violent**? By calling pictures of sex 'violent' when they are not, is only going to provoke glib responses like 'that's just one way of looking at it.' Images which manifestly degrade women should be described for what they are **really** doing. One may also leave aside, as these writers usually do, pictures of women whipping men.

This leads us to:



Sex and Power

The equation between masculinity and violence has become something of a truism over the past decade. It is even fused into a certain conception of male **sexuality**, which makes sex-and-violence figure as a natural pair, yoked together like 'law-and-order' or 'love-and-marriage' in contemporary discourse. Andrea Dworkin provides the exemplary formulas:

The annihilation of a woman's personality, individuality, will, character, is prerequisite to male sexuality

Sex and murder are fused in the male consciousness

or, as a piece of graffiti nicely puts it: "sex with men is violence against women".

Men, by and large, have not bothered to contest this view. It's not surprising really, because the question immediately arises of whether anyone really **believes** this (which renders argument over it's 'truth' somewhat redundant since the view is not, on this assumption, meant to reveal something about **real** men but rather expresses something about those who assert it), or whether it is just something said for effect, as part of a performance.

The possibility of discussion about such things is in any case prevented by a number of factors:

1. a climate of poisoned interaction, deliberately promoted in order to be able to demonstrate that men are 'frightened' by such ideas, with the aim, I suppose, of proving a male 'fear' of female sexuality, and also, perhaps, that such fear proves the 'truth' of the claims - as if resistance to the idea showed defensiveness, etc.
2. a tactical exploitation of the politico-moral principle on the Left that men must on no account criticise anything any woman says because to do so is to oppress them (a rule which incidentally perpetuates a very old custom whereby men collude together in the view that women cannot be expected to be sensible and are therefore not to be taken seriously)
3. the circumstance that ideas and theories about male sexuality can be developed in a sphere from which men's views on the matter are excluded on principle, so that any possibility of checking claims against 'experience' is ruled out of court (thereby, in fact, violating the principle, otherwise central, that 'experience' is sacrosanct and constitutes the **validation** of knowledge claims: men who make statements about 'female sexuality' are ridiculed on this count)
4. on top of this, an elaborate theoretical superstructure of discursive norms concerned with the epistemological 'subject' which insists that discussion of these matters has to conform to a particular academic orthodoxy, usually that of post-Lacanian 'conditions of discourse' is

thrown up which enables one to throw back any questions: "...from the moment a question is put, as soon as a reply is sought, we are **already caught up in a masculine interrogation**" (H. Cixous, 'Castration or Decapitation' Signs 7 (1) 1981)

Now it is obvious that most violence is committed by men. But phrases like 'male violence' weld the two terms together too rapidly (with the same Orwellian logic as 'free market' and 'western civilization' - as if they belong together **by definition** and any questioning is rendered unthinkable; for racists too, there is 'black muggers'). One can only see the element of specious reasoning (and special pleading) when we notice how this equation licenses a psychologising of masculinity rather than violence itself...But the **will** to cause pain, damage or death is by no means exclusive to males. A propensity to cruelty is not a male monopoly, and there is no **moral** virtue in a merely relative inability to accomplish such desires, whether physical or because of powerlessness. Male violence against women is a result of power not maleness. The writings of Andrea Dworkin are extremely powerful. They are (if the category be allowed) great literature, whose efficacy can be gauged by the status her name has acquired as a bogey that men use to bait feminism with. It is also notable that her sources come largely from literature: she draws on certain features of the **language** men have used to talk about sex to make claims about the 'reality' of male sexuality. Language, however, is a material force in its own right; it 'reflects' no such realities. Language, moreover, is directly implicated in sexuality at a very deep level. This is intractable, and goes far beyond the mere 'silence' of repression - of what may not be spoken; words themselves are eroticised and do not pass their meanings intact across the gender lines - not without translation at least. Words like domination and submission cannot be stripped of their pornographic meaning; the most problematic word in the sentence "sexual intercourse is a power relation" is not the word "power" of the word "sexual", it's the word "is".

Dworkin's claim to have 'revealed' the 'essence' of male sexuality as 'power' or 'violence' immediately poses the question of its own purpose, and its own possibilities of existence: in short, why did no-one 'know' this before? One thing is for sure - Dworkin's discourse is not the voice of victimism; it is the discourse of **vengeance**. Even if the term is no longer acceptable, it is moral indignation speaking. It should be clear that the assertion "This is what you ARE" **cannot** be a statement of 'fact'; it is an **accusation**, containing the silent interrogative: Is **THIS** what you want to be? Dworkin's less brilliant clones, of course, don't trouble themselves with such trifling contradictions as calling for men to change and, in the same breath, denying that they can.

Responses to Dworkin speak volumes about the general absence of any sense of proportion or context in social communication today. What she does to the 'truth' is a damage perfectly proportional to what she represents men as doing, on her version of reality. Anyone who shrugs that she is 'entitled' to her point of view is overlooking the fact that the power to 'allow' talk cannot be presumed to be lying around to be used just like that. There is a veritable war going on over the 'right' to speak at all, Dworkin has been vilified with such intensity that it is tantamount to a campaign of intimidation. Male writers of loathsome ideas about women have quite simply never had to face the kind of invective loaded upon Andrea Dworkin. It should be possible to criticise her arguments, but in point of fact it is not permissible in the present climate. But responsibility for fostering this climate cannot be apportioned so conveniently at the door of 'men' in general.

Her supporters reply in kind. A critical review of her work (by a woman) has been described as "filled with...hatred and loathing for women, feminists and lesbians" (**The Nation** August 1-8 1987) (Note the elision between the latter, concentric terms).

In all this venomous area, the obvious point that relations between men and women are not centred around 'sexuality' gets lost sight of. Notwithstanding fantasies about "Phallogratic" power, sexuality

occupies only a small part of the **power** relationship between men and women. The idea that male power over women, such as it is, has anything to do with cocks has always seemed to me a somewhat laughable notion, that could hardly be sustained seriously without being dressed up in mythological symbolism, and even then one suspects that it rests on a secret male joke at women's expense. It seems now that the only people who believe this are academic feminists, whose specialty seems to be the study of literary texts and who don't seem to distinguish social structures from the myths which legitimise them. If what you're struggling against is **ideas** of a certain kind, though, it would seem to be important to be clear whether anyone else actually **believes** in them.

In any case actual sexuality is hardly connected with social structures and ideologies in any straightforward way. Christianity as an ideology has been at odds with the behaviour of most people for centuries, though one feels that this has been forgotten in recent theoretical talk about 'patriarchy'. Do people who say things like 'rape has always been considered acceptable' **really mean** what they are saying? Actual sexual behaviour comprises a variety of configurations (lesbians and gay men exist across a whole range of social and cultural categories; cultural codes of sexual conduct are nowhere determined by any overarching 'patriarchal' system, any more than they are determined by the 'mode of production'). To imagine otherwise is to represent sexuality (that of men at least) with all the wooden caricaturization of the worst kind of mechanistic materialism. And, moreover, to pretend that women have played no part in shaping cultural systems is misleading. Any study of British middle class culture since the 19th century cannot turn a blind eye to the role of bourgeois women in constituting and policing the norms of 'permissible' public behaviour and 'acceptable' speech concerning sexuality; are feminists reluctant to acknowledge their heritage?

Naturally there are those who **want** to believe that the world is divided simply between a 'dominant' sex and a 'subordinate' sex in which the only relation is one of 'power'...and **violence**.

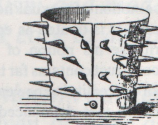
The most absurd formulations of this are found in the theories which try to explain social and cultural institutions as being produced out of an attempt by 'men' (in general) to 'control' the sexuality of women.

The custom of 'female circumcision' for example, receives a peculiar 'explanation' when looked at from this point of view. The practice is described as a violence inflicted upon women by men in order to suppress their sexual capacity. It is an appalling cruelty, to be sure, for which the term 'circumcision' is a euphemism; it is, properly speaking a **castration** of women (not a paradoxical expression at all: removal of the clitoris is more **literally** what castration means in Freudian terms than the removal of male testes). Circumcision of males, however, is a painful custom inflicted upon young boys in many cultures, without anaesthetic, and undoubtedly a cause of deep trauma (another occasion for remembering that Freud was a Jew). The **explanation** of such cultural practices is enormously difficult and the instant pseudo-explanations which crop up spontaneously are always wrong (like the ones that tell us Jews and Moslems prohibit the eating of pork for 'hygienic' rather than symbolic reasons: Western arrogance knows no self-doubt about its ability to 'explain' the exotic in terms of the familiar).

The barbarity of female 'circumcision' has **nothing** which allows us to assimilate it to the familiar brutalizations of women at the hands of doctors or men in general.

The operation, by all accounts, seems to be actually performed by women. So the explanation that it is done at the behest of 'men' (that it is 'rooted in' male power) requires acceptance of the assumption that women can be, even in their own separate cultural sphere, mere agents of a male will, acting as if by remote control. The idea that everything in culture is the work of 'men' is an astonishing excision of women's own role from history. Men have written women out of much of the record of Western history; but it is bad faith for feminism to dive culture arbitrarily into its 'good' and 'bad' sides, attributing the latter entirely to men.

DO YOU WISH TO AVOID BEING STRANGLED!!



III PSYCHOLOGIES OF POWER

Authoritarianism: Dependency and Punishment

It would be negligent to omit from this discussion of the clustering of ideas related to violence a consideration of the concept of authoritarianism. Such an examination is bound to provoke unease especially among libertarians, for whom the term authoritarianism has become something of a shibboleth (so much so that 'anti-authoritarian' is the most favoured alternative self-identification to that of 'anarchist'). Since psychoanalysis is currently the hegemonic discourse for discussing the politics of everyday life, the following discussion will be conducted in these terms. If the results are uncomfortable, then maybe one should remember that psychological explanations don't necessarily produce politically congenial conclusions.

The popular meaning of authoritarianism, probably owes most to Wilhelm Reich, by whom it was used with extraordinary crudity to provide a connecting link between his mechanistic-materialist models of both 'individual' and 'society'. The 'repression' of the former was the result of 'oppression' in the latter: the authoritarian/patriarchal family was the mechanism for the simple transmutation of social power (conceptualised in Leninist terms as centred in the coercive apparatus of the state) into individual neurosis (conceptualised in terms of a quasi-biological inhibition of the 'sex-drive'). The simplicity of this assimilation of political and psychological processes no doubt accounts for its popularity. It also goes with the grain of 20th century 'progressive' ideology in reducing to virtual invisibility all the complex mediations between different forms of social power (state, class, family, cultural institutions, peer-groups etc.) and directs attention upon the mind/body of the abstract individual whose narcissistic preoccupations are thereby encouraged. It is surprising that feminist criticisms of Reich's theories (of which the most damning is his entirely 'masculinist' conception of the sexual act itself, and his brutally medical/normative notion of 'sexual health' - in which the social relation between partners is treated as epiphenomenal) have not gone so far as to criticise his notion of the 'authoritarian'/'patriarchal' family. This construct contains far too many ideological investments for a scrutiny of its 'reality' to be very inviting. Just look at the way Christopher Lasch was denounced for his attempt to discuss the possible functions of fatherhood (compare W. Breines et al 'Social Biology, Family Studies & Anti-Feminist Backlash' *Feminist Studies* 1978 with Lasch's own texts: *Culture of Narcissism* etc). Today, as we all know, the 'father' figures only as an actual or possible child-abuser.

What I want to look at here, however, is the way authoritarianism itself figures as a way of thinking about power. The central point, it seems, is a tendency to see power and domination as rooted in or at least as embodied in a certain 'subject' or, more specifically, a certain type of subjectivity. This view has persisted in spite of all recent critiques of the category of the subject and it is indeed a very powerful image, lodged in the imagination: say the word 'authoritarian' and we nearly all retrieve the same mental category in the same way, as a **personification**. So be it, then. Let's see where it can lead. It is not widely appreciated that the theory of the 'authoritarian personality' developed by the Frankfurt School was radically different from Reich's theory both in its explanation and in its actual conceptualisation of the phenomenon. This latter approach, whatever its limitations, has the virtue of being less flattering to the ego of self-styled anti-authoritarians and by that very token potentially more useful. The usefulness of a theory may not actually be directly proportional to the extent to which it challenges one to think reflexively, but it is certainly true that the extent to which a theory affirms one's preconceptions and obviates the need for such thinking is directly proportional to its uselessness.

The specific point on which the Adorno/Horkheimer theory differs from Reich's is that it is based on the **decline** of the 'patriarchal' family. The prevailing belief that such a family still exists is very revealing of a **need** to imagine such a thing.

Adorno was alert to the implications of constructing 'types' at a time when racist theories and the culture industry were developing them for purposes of administering mass consumption and mass extermination:

There is reason to look for psychological types because the world in which we live is typed and 'produces' different types of persons. Only by identifying stereotypical traits in modern human beings, and not by denying their existence, can the pernicious tendency towards all-purpose classification and subordination be challenged.

With this in mind (surely an understatement today when new 'categories' proliferate from the worlds of advertising and social administration almost weekly) let's look at how the category of authoritarianism is presented:

What is emphasised, and this is often overlooked, is that the 'authoritarian' type of personality is only one amongst a set of permutations or transformations of psychological and social ingredients, and is presented explicitly within a frame of reference provided by these other types.

Authoritarianism itself is patently **not** to be construed according to some one-dimensional image of a swaggering autocrat exuding **personal** power and self-gratifying in the display of it. The figure invoked is rather that of the subordinate - the bureaucrat wholly circumscribed within a hierarchy. The concept is **dialectical** - defined by the 'duality' (developed out of the theory of **sadomasochism**) of pleasure in exercising power and also pleasure in submission and obedience.

The authoritarian personality is one with a **weak** ego (insufficient autonomy, exhibited by a social position requiring deference to superiors or strict dependence upon peer-group approval). This type is prone to persecutory, punitive attitudes towards selected others because its mode of formation is not consummated in personal independence but is reinforced by being delegated as the exercise of external, vicarious power over others. One important thing about the lack of autonomy is the fragility or absence of personal moral conscience (the 'superego' remains 'outside' the individual rather than 'internalised': Purely contingent, social considerations effectively play the part of moral judgements: it's OK as long as you're not found out.). The most disturbing aspect of this syndrome perhaps is precisely the fact that the propensity to violence, immanent in this form of personality, is entirely 'normal' - indeed commensurate with the 'civilization' in which it is nurtured. In sharp contrast with cultures in which a certain stylized violence is cultivated among males (from which the term 'machismo' has been appropriated), this authoritarian violence cannot be assuaged, modulated or constrained by social norms or cultural values pertinent to the situation. A 'macho' male aspires to demonstrate his prowess against a bull or some other adversary worthy of challenge or some enemy who has violated some deeply revered symbol. An 'authoritarian' - pseudo-civilized - male (or female) can commit any atrocity whatsoever through the socially-produced incapacity for moral judgement, and the social division of labour (and responsibility).

But this is not the only form of psychological configuration of power: there are five other 'types' worth considering. First the three most closely related to authoritarianism proper, and therefore easily confused with it.

Continued on page 19

This is described as an acceptance of the prevailing standards of social conduct as such in preference to the experience of discontent, and more specifically, as an excessive deference to the mores of the in-group. The example given is that of the worker who accepts the prejudices of the peer-group simply out of conformity rather than out of personal feelings on the matter, and judges social and political alternatives solely in terms of their bearing upon his or her relative status. Sociologists (and those who swallow sociological vocabulary on these matters - 'dominant values', 'socialization' etc) treat such sheeplike conservatism as unproblematic, yet it is a historically-specific complex and a social problem of the first magnitude. Radicals and revolutionaries who have a 'sociological' conception of society as a system which simply imposes 'its' values across generations never seem to ask themselves why some people **reject** these values. How do radicals account for their own existence, if 'society' works so smoothly. Don't expect answers from sociology. The conventionalist type of personality is not 'authoritarian', simply conservative. This trait would represent the bedrock for the popular **acquiescence** in fascism and the inertial factor that undermines resistance to authority of **any kind** whenever it is perceived as threatening to the individual's social position vis a vis others.

Conventionalists are those who will express disapproval of persecution, but support the complete **exclusion** of 'aliens'; needless to say, this trait is just as prevalent among radicals of the Left as it is on the Right, as shown by the near-universal tendency towards the same simplification of issues and solution of problems by the expulsion of, or separation from, those 'others' whose very **presence** is perceived as endangering the social coherence of the 'identities' people acquire from their groups.



The roots of this behaviour are, however, not intrinsically bad. What gives sociology its cogency is the fact that social bonds are the condition for all that is good in human beings. All moral virtues express **social** virtues. In a time of obligatory egotism we have to re-learn how to realize that 'solidarity' so often talked about as if it came naturally. Motions passed by committees aren't worthy of being called gestures of solidarity until there is collective actions as its basis.

In this context, all the nasty psychological literature about 'masses' and 'crowds' and their evil accomplishments have to be reckoned with. Anyone who has read accounts of lynch mobs will know that becoming part of a crowd enables individuals (of all classes and

genders) to do the most unspeakable violence against other human beings. But consider the following from Elias Canetti, the most thorough-going pessimist in the whole genre of crowd-psychologists. He is referring to what he calls 'prohibition crowds' - those which come into being by a collective **refusal**

a large number of people together refuse to continue to do what, till then, they had done singly. They obey a prohibition, and this prohibition is sudden and self-imposed. ...It is as absolute as a command, but what is decisive about it is its negative character. Contrary to appearances, it never really comes from outside, but always originates in some need of those it affects. As soon as the prohibition has been enunciated the crowd begins to form. Its members all refuse to do what the outside world expects them to do. What, till then, they had done without any fuss, as if it was natural to them and not at all difficult, they now suddenly refuse to do in any circumstances; and the firmness of their refusal is the measure of their togetherness. From the moment of its birth this crowd is transfused with the negativeness of prohibition, and this remains its essential characteristic as long as it exists. ...It is formed by resistance; the prohibition is a frontier nothing can cross, a dam nothing can pierce. Each person watches the other to see whether he remains part of the dam. Anyone who gives way and transgresses the prohibition is outlawed by all the others

Canetti takes the **strike** as the best embodiment of this kind of collective action, which fuses people together through the **creation** of a common experience. Whatever 'equality' may exist already in workers' circumstances is not sufficient by itself to lead to the formation of a crowd. But the spontaneous eruption of a strike gives force to a real equality: "it consists in their common refusal to continue to work; and this refusal is something which permeates the whole person. The conviction created by a prohibition on work is both keen and strongly resistant."

The moment of standstill is a great moment, and has been celebrated in workers' songs. There are many things which contribute to the workers' feelings of relief at the start of a strike. The fictitious equality, which they had heard made so much of, had never really meant more than that they all used their hands. Now it has suddenly become a real equality...when they all stop work, they all do the same thing. It is as though their hands had all dropped at exactly the same moment and now they had to exert all their strength not to lift them again, however hungry their families. Stopping work makes the workers equals. Their concrete demands are actually of less importance than the effect of this moment. The aim of the strike may be a wage increase, and they certainly feel at one in this aim. But by itself it is not sufficient to make a crowd out of them...

Within the strike it is essential that everyone should abide by the undertaking not to work. Spontaneously from within the crowd itself there springs up an organisation with the functions of a state. It is fully conscious of the shortness of its life and has only a very small number of laws; but these are strictly kept. Pickets guard the entrances to the place where the strike started, and the workplace itself is forbidden ground. The interdict on it lifts it out of its everyday triviality and endows it with a special dignity. It is its emptiness and stillness it has something sacred. The fact that the strikers have taken over responsibility for it turns it into a common possession and, as such, it is protected and invested with a higher significance. Anyone who comes near it is examined about his convictions. Anyone who approaches it with profane intentions, wanting to work there, is treated as an enemy or traitor.

Allowing even for the simplification of issues, this account is already streets ahead of what passes for an understanding of collective action among academics, especially for its grasp of the essentially symbolic, moral and *supra*-individual forces at work. More to the point, even the jaundiced Canetti says:

The organisation sees to it that food and money are fairly distributed. What they have must last for as long as possible, so it is important that everyone should receive equally little. It does not occur to the strong to think that they should have more, and even the greedy are satisfied with their portion. As there is usually only a very little for everyone, and as distribution is settled in good faith and publicly, it adds to the pride which the crowd feels in its equality. There is something deeply serious and worthy of respect about such an organisation and, when the ferocity and destructiveness of crowds are mentioned, one cannot help remembering the responsibility and dignity of these structures sprung spontaneously from crowds. An examination of the prohibition crowd is essential if only for the reason that it exhibits such entirely different, and indeed contrary, qualities. As long as it remains true to its nature, it is averse to destruction
(Crowds and Power pp. 63-5)



Manipulation and Resentment: Movers and Shakers

The two other types most proximate to authoritarianism are characterised as the 'manipulative' type and that driven by surface 'resentment' respectively. We've already met these in a different guise. Let's introduce them properly:

The manipulative personality is not always as instrumentally rational as the term might suggest. In Adorno's account at least what comes to mind first is the strata who were to be the prime beneficiaries of fascist rule: the managers and technocrats (and exactly the same categories came into their own under Stalinism - these are the people for whom such political niceties are less important than they are for others in different social locations). The psychodynamics of manipulation, however, are far more extensive, and the subsequent emergence of entire new branches of technical expertise and management make extending even this idea necessary. For these people stereotyping is second nature: it is the very form of their being-in-the-world; this is a world "viewed diagrammatically as a field for administrative manipulation". Their attachment is to the technicalities rather than to people or things as such. Everything is viewed from the point of view of performance, utility, regardless of content. People who pigeonhole people and situations in terms of a personal career-strategy or who calculate ends and means in terms of the progress of the organisation or faction to which they have attached themselves are no less prominent on the Left than on the Right. It is, in any case, a mistake to imagine that careerism signifies any necessary gravitation to the Right; it depends entirely on which way the wind is blowing and whom it is who is to be manipulated.

All one can say for sure is that manipulators know how to blend themselves into whatever is going on; they are in the tailstream of every movement. Once a movement has got to the stage of the 'long march through the institutions' these people suddenly come to the fore making all the radical noises they were never before heard to utter when there might be some jeopardy in doing so. These are the people who want to 'get things done', but become very vague and peremptory when asked exactly how the 'measures' they are pressing forward so vigorously actually promote the cause whose spokesperson they have come to be. They smell out the main chances while others are still debating first principles.

Since, as we all know, the personal is political (that word 'is' again), manipulation appears at the level of interpersonal interaction even when there are no job-titles, short-listings or other 'material interests' at stake. It develops in early childhood that some people learn the knack of deploying tears and tantrums to get their way. And lying - a remarkable propensity for fantasy disarms adults who underestimate children in this regard. Who has not heard children bending adults to their will by telling them what they want (or alternatively dread) to hear? It may start with pretending to have a brother or sister, and can end with pretending that your committee is 'the community'.

Resentment

This was an integral part of the complex; it is clear from Adorno's remarks that this was the syndrome exploited to the hilt by Nazi **propaganda**, without having to be prevalent on a mass scale nor particularly salient amongst the fascists themselves. It is here that the dialectic of 'rationalization' (in its everyday sense) is most effective and appeals which help keep unconscious/unspoken motives beneath the threshold of awareness are most fruitful. The shopkeeper who feels that his lack of success is caused by the sinister manipulations of Jewish chain-store owners provides the model, as do the respectable householders who fear that foreigners moving into their street will lower their status. These attitudes are often called 'scapegoating', but the crucial thing is that is **self-deception** that makes it possible, which is why the concept of scapegoat is not an 'explanation'. Nobody consciously entertains the idea of blaming some out-group arbitrarily and so this very popular folk-explanation of racism is superficial.

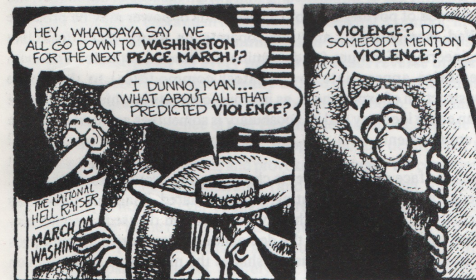
Resentment operates like this: at its basis is a fundamental anxiety connected with a specific sense of 'failure' (it is essential that the problem involve a notion of personal responsibility or guilt for the displacement to take the form it does). But the attempt is made to resolve this problem in an 'imaginary' way by colluding with some socially-reinforced ideology already available which, being external, can appear 'rational' and 'objective'. The sense of 'failure' itself deserves more scrutiny than it normally receives at the hands of middle-class academics, for whom the idea is occupationally necessary. Those who are anxious about their own **perceived** inability to attain standards or goals they have accepted could, in some cases perhaps, be helped considerably by a conscious rejection of the standards and goals themselves. The adoption of the idea that one's failures are the result of machinations by, or privileges monopolised by, some class of enemies is a socially dangerous way of redeeming one's self esteem. It is a classic 'petty bourgeois' disease and that is why the petty bourgeoisie interpret the (quite different) sense of class injustice as if it were mere resentment or 'envy'. The language of 'opportunities', 'ambition', 'competition' (and their counterparts 'closure', 'monopoly', 'privilege') is riddled with this ideology.

The logic of resentment operates in a variety of contexts. Resentment can be seen in the attitudes of some men towards aspects of feminism which are represented as being a shrewd upward mobility strategy by middle class female careerists - an additional advantage for those already privileged. Even where there can be shown to be some 'truth' in the view, the logic of resentment ensures that other, less consciously acknowledged, motives are brought into play too. One can usually

spot this by the way such surface 'grievances' become compounded behind the 'rational' surface: when some blatantly unjustified promotion, for example, is referred to in the same breath as some **other** gripe which is connected with 'women' per se and not at all with the middle-class careerism which ostensibly was the object of concern. This, it shouldn't be necessary to say, is exactly the same 'logic' by which anti-semitism, racism and other forms of prejudice operate; its extent is such that it is crucial not to take expressed grievances at face-value. The logic has its female versions too.

It is resentment, in fact, which lies at the bottom of much personal violence: violence is fuelled by it and directed by it in its course. Jealousy, for example, is a species of resentment.

Violence against women in **this** context at least can be rendered 'intelligible' to most men and therefore a bridgehead built against male resistance in order to develop larger measures for dealing practically with the wider violences. Arguments that dwell upon some generic, motiveless and meaningless male urge to hurt women cut less ice and, in fact, let most men 'off the hook' by their transparent irrelevance. It is like proposing to tackle hunger in Africa solely by ending the 'greed' of Americans and Europeans. More concrete connections can be demonstrated, and thus more practical measures promoted, by starting with specifics.

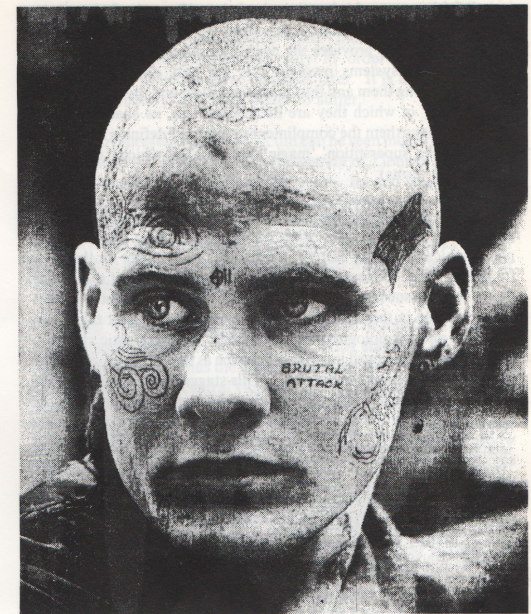


Rebels and Cranks

The two final types in this scheme should be instantly familiar. We know them well; some of our best friends, in fact.

The 'rebel' represents those whose transformation of the Oedipus complex (we can spare the jargon by now) leads not to identification with/internalization of parental authority but to rebellion against all authority. Anarchists would be happy enough to be so designated, but it should be noticed that this attitude is most strongly marked only in response to those forms of 'authority' most reminiscent of one's own parents, which makes it a very selective, even arbitrary kind of politics. Characteristic of the rebel moreover, is a disinclination to accept particular cultural forms in which power may clothe itself, which is not at all inconsistent with a willingness to wield power oneself. The rebel's hatred for the power of others doesn't necessarily extend to a critique of power as such.

Adorno makes the point that this rebellion is linked to strong destructive impulses; these are demonstrably at work at the level of fantasy in the fondness for slogans with words like "Smash X!" and ultraleftist catchphrases about destructiveness being a creative force are rather thin glosses for the infantile reveries being indulged. More seriously, and here Adorno was aware of the contribution this type made within fascism, he points out that it is "accompanied by secret readiness to capitulate" to the very authority which is so hated. One reason for being suspicious of people whose politics are fuelled by unfinished



business from their childhood is precisely that their 'real' enemy may not be the same as our own, behind a shared name for him, and indeed our fellow rebels may surprise us by turning out on his side soon enough. We've all seen the vociferously 'anti-authoritarian' activist slip effortlessly into quite brutal treatment of others. Those who attacked the bodies and property of Jews in Germany believed themselves to be attacking their 'oppressors'.

Rebels may be full of vituperation against 'The State', 'The System', 'The Bosses' or even 'Capital'; but those things can be constructed in various imaginary ways; closer examination of how the ideas are **linked** with the feelings may sometimes be necessary before we climb aboard. What Adorno calls the 'nihilistic, swashbuckling behaviour' exhibited by the stormtroopers and concentration camp guards is characteristic of the rebel not the **authoritarian** personality: the latter may be more dangerous - they will impose a 'Final Solution' out of administrative 'necessity'; but the former will add the refinements of torture for their own pleasure. This type is the one with bitter scores to settle and is drawn to any helpless victim like a shark to the smell of blood. You can hear them baying at meetings, baiting their targets.

Finally, the 'crank' - at the opposite pole, apparently, to the authoritarian personality - belongs nevertheless to the precise sociological niche from which the core of the Nazi leadership emerged: occultist, mystical, 'Nature' fetishists like Hitler, Hess and Himmler.

Individuals whose failure to accept the Reality Principle drives them into isolation based on a spurious inner world. They develop preoccupations with their own 'soul' and paranoid suspicions of the world outside. Prejudice is vital to these people. They belong to the lunatic sects and cults - often with some panacea about 'Nature', battling against imaginary forces of evil with a magical belief in undigested science and easy prey to racist theories.

The ambiguous relationship between the rebel and power (a mixture of envy and mimicry) is replicated in the relationship between

'cranks' (devotees of 'alternative' wisdom if you prefer) and the 'official' or established knowledge from which they feel excluded. The latter actually provides the necessary pole around which their various eclectic systems revolve; it is the only common point of reference among them and thus these occultism and mysticisms need this 'science' of which they are its complement, its shadow. (And positivism pays them the compliment in return of defining science by contrast to the 'superstition', 'magic', 'intuition' etc which it constructs in the same terms).

It would be no exaggeration to say that the eccentric milieu exercises an almost total sway over what passes for thinking on the larger philosophical issues of Nature, Humanity, Technology on the Left. Its genealogical connections with Nazism are a matter of record but that is not the issue here; what makes it relevant to the present argument is that people in this camp want above all else to assert their own doctrines and cosmologies (which are often quite dogmatic systems) against what they almost invariably describe as the 'Rational' character of modern science and technology. This staggering consensus about the alleged 'rationality' of today's nightmare machine is only matched in its absurdity by the claim to transcend it by using only those means whose ineffectiveness has been demonstrated. As MacEnroe would say, "*You can NOT be serious*". Indeed they are NOT serious but they like to think they are. When the crunch comes they do not renounce the links that matter to the 'official' knowledges (the media, publishing, even professorships). The Peace Movement and the defence of the Earth are too important to be influenced by those who want mainly to protect themselves from being seen for what they are.

I'd like to draw the following as 'conclusions' from all this, in the hope that they have more than mere improvements in language to commend them:

1. Radicalism must be **assertive** even emphatic both in theory and practice, but it has no need of exaggeration at a time when we are living under a system which can be demonstrated in full sobriety to be destroying not only the conditions for civilised life but the very basis for any sustainable life at all in the long run. There is enough **real** violence around not to need melodramatic simulation or hyperbole.

2. Aggression is not just a feature of 'male' behaviour. It is not some 'essence' of which all its forms are equally bad. If the preceding arguments are accepted then it surely follows that men who are busily trying to be 'less aggressive' might be better advised instead to try simply to be more perceptive of other people's interests. Self-centred introspection is a snare to be avoided like the plague. Nobody benefits from anyone else's self-examination except therapists - whose own motivations should not be left unexamined.

3. Concern with the situations that produce interpersonal violence is of enormous practical significance. The old adage that 'it takes two to start a fight' and 'there are two sides' to every conflict may seem to entail a tendency to **implicate the victims**, but it only does so if one is going to be as stupid as one's rhetoric. Techniques for provoking other people to violence are quite easy to master, but often resorted to, by force of habit, in the most perilous situations...which suggests they rarely require much intelligence. Techniques for **deflecting, subverting, or preventing** violence should not be any more difficult to discover, without any need for the self-important and top-heavy baggage of psychotherapy. Preventing violence arising, as already suggested, has nothing to do with avoiding, denying or resolving **conflict**. 'Preventing violence' doesn't have to mean what it all-too-often does in practice: people in power trying to con their opponents into capitulating.

4. But violence, for all practical purposes, is something one must take to be a fact of life for the foreseeable future. Its sheer extent calls for recognition of the need for defences. Here is where the distinction between force (coercion) and violence must be insisted upon. The capacity shown by black communities to mobilise collective means of

physical force, and to do so rapidly, has much to teach the rest of us (provided of course that this is not understood to mean mindless mimicry based on an imaginary identification). Representations of blacks as 'victims' by much of the Left underestimates the power and self-confidence that grow out of precisely not playing the 'victim' card.

5. The main point, however, is this: very little of the current understanding of 'violence' or 'aggression' illuminates the very things which it always presupposes - namely **POWER**. Reducing power to violence or aggression makes it appear to reside in the individual body, and yet the capacity to do harm, and the desire to impose one's will (if this be what 'aggression' means) is not a cause of power; it only matters when it is a result of power, and this is not necessarily the most crucial aspect. There are a whole variety of different forms of power which are not easily understood, and sometimes become quite invisible, if we keep violence in its most lurid forms at the centre of attention.

In particular, there are developing new forms of power associated with emerging kinds of relationships characteristic of renescent capitalism - kinds of power which easily escape the language derived from physical violence: they are not obviously brutal or crushing but they are truly exploitative, if not always literally 'oppressive'. These forms of power are often very subtle and even indirect, coercive, compulsive, working by lies and delusions; and yet rarely does the intimidatory aspect revolve around the clear threat of physical violence: what is 'threatened' is more often the loss of autonomy, the likelihood of poverty or debt. These kinds of power may be properly called manipulation, and they operate on every level, from the engineering of culture (to determine the moods, attitudes and even memories appropriate to the latest commodities) to the direct construction of experiences, as in group-contexts in which acceptance of an entire ideology and its vocabulary is sometimes a virtual condition of employment.

Even the face of class power is changing, and rhetoric about 'bosses' needs radically reformulating. An outdated image of bosses as exclusively white men with grey hair, fat and dressed in sober pin-stripe suits and exhibiting the demeanour of 'authority' figures lives on in the Left subconscious. It shapes the metaphors of those even who are no longer involved in any genuine struggle for general freedom, but are only pursuing positions and advantages for people of their 'own' kind. (So that it is the whiteness and maleness of the boss that is more salient than the boss relation as such). Today, increasingly, 'the boss' (insofar as it is still sometimes meaningful to



identify some individual character as a mediator of one's situation) might well be young, female, informal, and talk the language of one's own subculture. The power we are subject to is less and less a matter of 'giving orders' in any case. We are finding our fate predetermined by inscrutable forces we may discover to have been rigged, but which we cannot refer back to any clearly definable 'subject' of such power.

Power takes a great variety of forms. Always our images and metaphors take off from some particular form or aspect. What happens when some such image dominates over the imagination is that other kinds of power which may be oppressive, exploitive or manipulative, fail to find adequate conscious expression, and one can find oneself struggling to strengthen, rather than to free oneself from, forces one hasn't grasped.

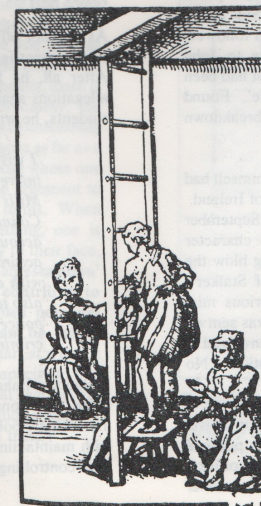
The image of patriarchy fuses together a number of concepts which, whilst having internal coherence, certainly cannot claim to be exhaustive of the experience of power. To stay on the same terrain as 'patriarchy' (which fuses the political and the personal and the material and the mythical), it is perfectly possible to construct a 'matriarchal' conception of power. The purpose of this would not be to set up some sort of 'balancing' between patriarchal (masculine/father) and matriarchal (feminine/mother) modes of domination, as if both were complementary, but rather to find words to describe something that is currently inexpressible, but nonetheless 'real'. Not to put too fine a point on it, it is meant to challenge the ideologically-laden notion of 'motherhood' as a wholly positive, wholesome relation, characterised by nurturance, caring and sensitivity. The uncritical reproduction of the cliché that mothering is good, fathering is bad, perpetuates an idyllic fantasy which deserves to be challenged anyway: maybe to be 'mothered' is to experience a subordination from which we might need emancipation. Canetti, again, is quite unsentimental:

*A mother is one who gives her own body to be eaten...Her behaviour appears selfless...But what has really happened is that she now has two stomachs instead of one, and keeps control of both...
...The mother's power over a young child is absolute, not only because its life depends on her, but also because she herself feels a very strong urge to exercise this power all the time. The concentration of the appetite for domination on such a small organism gives rise to a feeling of superiority greater than that obtaining in any other habitual relationship between human beings.*

Those of us who have had mothers will surely admit that the relation is one of power, and however comforting and morally acceptable the dependency may be, it is at least sometimes a relationship producing conflict and resistance. It is in the resistance to such power perhaps that it reveals features which are of wider relevance, for which 'motherhood' might make a suitable metaphor:

She is occupied day and night with this domination, and its continuity and the enormous number of details in which it is expressed give it a roundness and perfection which no other kind of power achieves. It is not confined to the giving of orders, for these could not be understood by a very young child. It means that a creature is kept prisoner, even though in this case genuinely for its own advantage; that the mother, though without knowing what is happening can pass on to it the commands imposed on her decades before and which she has since retained intact in herself; that she can enforce growth - something to which rulers only approximate by conferring promotions in rank. For the mother, the child combines the qualities of both plants and animals. It allows her the enjoyment of sovereign rights which can otherwise only be exercised separately; like a plant she can make it grow in accordance with her wishes and, like an animal, she can keep it prisoner and control its movements. It grows under her hands like corn and like a domestic animal, it carries out those movements which she permits it...There is no intenser form of power. (Crowds and Power p. 256-60).

The growing tendency of the State to treat its subjects like children by, on the one hand the extension of the boundaries of concern of welfare agencies to the heart of the individual, and on the other the regulation of information and the use of crudely behaviourist practices of social control, suggests that as a metaphor the above has its uses in the description of contemporary power. Certainly the increased paraphernalia of control, and its ability to assimilate itself into apparent structures of independent social existence (from co-operatives to neighbourhood watches) gives the present State 'a roundness and perfection' other ages would find hard to equal. □



Medieval bone-setting

Policing the Truth

The lionisation of John Stalker as 'honest copper' has obscured the ugly reality of policing in the eighties. Martin Walker sheds some light on the murk in Manchester.

IN APRIL THIS YEAR A YOUNG MANCUNIAN, Frank Logan, went on trial in Manchester charged with 'attempting to pervert the course of justice'. Following complaints made against Greater Manchester police officers after the assault on students picketing Leon Brittan's visit to the University in March 1985, the Assistant Chief Constable, John Stalker, brought in investigating officers from Avon and Somerset. In the following year, Steven Shaw and Sarah Hollis were assaulted, their homes burgled and material relevant to the police stolen. Other burglaries occurred involving evidence of complaints; at the offices of the City Council Police Monitoring Unit; at the GLC Police Committee offices; at the home of Manchester City Council Inquiry co-ordinator, and at the home of a young woman who witnessed an assault on Sarah Hollis. In other related incidents, witnesses were threatened and students kept under surveillance.

The report of the Avon and Somerset enquiry went to the Police Complaints Authority in June 1986, and has remained secret. In part its concerns might be judged by the decision of the Crown Prosecutors to charge Frank Logan and Steven Shaw with 'attempting to pervert the course of justice'. Logan was charged after telling journalists that two Moss Side detectives approached him and discussed a burglary at Sarah Hollis's flat. At his trial this year he was acquitted which implies at least that someone in the court recognised the police were lying. In respect of Steven Shaw, Avon and Somerset detectives concluded that he conspired to fabricate claims of attacks and burglary. In 1985, Steven had worked on the campaign for Jaqueline Berkley and later become so concerned that he might be charged after the Avon and Somerset enquiry, that he left the country.

In 1984, Jaqueline Berkley, a young black woman, told a youth worker that she had been raped while in custody at Moss Side police station. A complaint was made and a long investigation followed, conducted by Greater Manchester officers answerable to John Stalker. The investigation decided that Jackie's complaint had been malicious and she was charged with 'wasting police time'. Found guilty by a magistrate after an exhausting trial, she had a breakdown and attempted suicide.

A year before Leon Brittan's visit to Manchester, Stalker himself had been appointed to investigate five shootings in the north of Ireland. After submitting his interim report to Sir John Hermon in September 1985, an orchestrated campaign of intimidation and character assassination was begun against him. In a final crushing blow the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire assumed control of Stalker's investigation and began investigating allegations of serious misconduct against Stalker himself. In May 1986, Stalker was sent on temporary leave amid rumours that he was homosexual, involved in criminal rackets, drugs smuggling and political corruption. No charges came from the enquiry.

Stalkers' recent explanation for this plot against him appears naive. His investigation, he suggests, was wound up because political embarrassment would have resulted from a trial of RUC officers implicated in a 'shoot to kill' policy. This may be part of an answer



but the real reason for the conspiracy against him is probably more mundane. Like Frank Logan, Steven Shaw and Jacqueline Berkley, Stalker was doing the unmentionable in making public the fact that police officers were involved in crime.

As a senior officer Stalker must have been aware that he could not simply investigate police officers as if they were putative criminals. After all, he himself had acted that self righteous officer over allegations against his own force. In relation to the harassment of students, he wrote to the B.B.C. in November 1985:

'I wish to say that I refute entirely many of the inferences and allegations made in the Platts-Mills Report (The Report of the Manchester City Council public enquiry). I know that some of the accounts given by supposed witnesses were not accurate and these are being thoroughly investigated with a view to pursuing the matter further. I also totally reject and resent the suggestion that police officers of this force have committed criminal acts of burglary and theft.'

Stalkers' primary concern at that time seems no different from that of those who conspired against him later. In a contemporary and increasingly politically conscious police force there is more concern with maintaining a particular public perception of themselves than with controlling crime.

The history of large scale inter-constabulary enquiries in Britain is farcical. They are begun begrudgingly after clamour by politicians; set off with much false gusto and moral bellowing only to fade quickly into the mists of the Augean Stable.

In December 1969, Frank Williamson, an H.M. Inspector of Constabularies, was appointed 'to take an interest in the enquiry into the Times allegations'. A week previously the Times had published a long front page article about corruption in the Met. based at Scotland Yard, Williamson brought in five officers from outside London. Early in the enquiry, it was clear that the efforts made by Metropolitan investigations were dilatory. Four days after the Times article appeared Met. officers were still questioning the two journalists who wrote it.

Williamson was massively obstructed; denied interviews with suspected officers; his papers stolen; his phone calls intercepted. Eventually, he moved the enquiry to Tintagel House. Williamson finished his report in ten months, but when its recommendations went unacknowledged by Sir Robert Mark then the Met. Commissioner, he felt forced to resign. A campaign of character assassination organised against him during the enquiry began again after his retirement when he talked on television about corruption.

Williamson's recommendations included the following;

'that information against policemen must be dealt with promptly and positively' and 'Enquiries should be recognised as having the whole objective of establishing the truth'. (my emphasis)

Almost ten years later in 1978, another team of 'outsiders' came to London and began another enquiry into London's police. 'Operation Countryman' was precipitated by statements given by supergrasses concerning police involvement in three major robberies in the City of London.

Leonard Burt, Assistant Chief Constable of Dorset headed the team of officers drawn from Avon and Somerset. In turn, Burt was responsible to two deputy Commissioners at the Yard. Countryman, was initially based in a portakabin behind Camberwell police station; the keys being handed each night to the station sergeant. After problems with security, the enquiry moved outside London to Godalming in Surrey. Even so, there followed break-ins at the offices of the City Chief Constable and his operational chief.

Six months into their investigation, Countryman officers had drawn up a list of ninety six London officers whom they believed should be investigated for serious criminal offences. By the end of 1979, the relationship between Countryman, the Met, and the offices of the Director of Public Prosecutions, was intolerable. On political instructions, Countryman was scaled down and early in 1980 the majority of the allegations were handed over to the Yard's own investigative branch.

The Chief Constable of Dorset, Arthur Hambleton, who had energetically supported his Assistant, spoke on the 'World at One' the day he retired, about the obstruction of the enquiry and the level of corruption it had uncovered. Two months later, Hambleton himself became the subject of a police enquiry conducted by the Assistant Chief Constable of South Yorkshire. A number of 'serious irregularities' were being looked into, no charges resulted from the investigations.

When Countryman officers left London they bequeathed their investigation to a number of journalists who had worked alongside them. This raised interesting questions of who is responsible for pursuing the truth and who has the power to make the truth real. It is not possible to make sense of conspiracies by reading 'official' documents. To understand why the police do what they do, we have to understand their culture, how their corporate psychology is shaped

and upon what their interpersonal and professional relationships are founded. For these 'truths', we have to turn to our artists rather than journalists, whose patrons often expect 'official' versions.

Some contemporary writers have turned to fiction in the age old manner of disguising unpalatable or subversive truths. One writer who has been writing the unofficial history of the police and crime since 1974 is G. F. Newman. Newman has done for the British police what Upton Sinclair did for the Chicago meat packers in 'The Jungle'. He has recorded the relationship between criminals, police officers and senior law officers, from the gangsterdom of the Krays and Richardsons (**Sir You Bastard, You Nice Bastard, and The Price**); through the decade of armed robbery in the seventies, (**A Villains Tale, A Detectives Tale and A Prisoners Tale**); into the dawning politicisation of the police, the days of supergrasses and Operation Countryman in **Set a Thief**.

Newman's latest book, **The Testing Ground**, is a detailed and highly authoritative collage of the Stalker Affair; the Broadwater Farm uprising; the rape of a young black woman in custody and the serious assaults on a young male student following a demonstration against the Home Secretary. It succeeds in drawing together all the compromising strands of a Senior police officers life when he is sent to the north of Ireland.

Writers from Eastern Europe have increasingly become favoured amongst the literati in this country. They are seen as continuing a tradition begun with Kafka in which the observer on the hero is stranded in a labyrinth of life questions and obscure State bureaucracies. Such writing is seen implicitly as critical of 'communist' systems. Gordon Newman deals in a straightforward narrative way with exactly similar subjects. Using none of the pretensions of 'art', he strips away the hypocrisy surrounding police corruption and official secrecy, lays bare the opportunistic deceit of legal and government officials and recounts the closed rituals of State power.

*As we live in an age of conspiracies,
'truth' has become a term of derision.
Now, even 'the facts' are negotiated in
the political and economic market
place.*

The publishers of **'The Testing Ground'**, Newman's Stalker book are presently considering a re-launch. Since its publication last October, it has not had a single review in any 'quality' publication. As a committed social writer, Newman seems to have entered a fog bank of informal censorship.

While Newman's book, which attempts to explain the institutional and personal reality of police power and the complex mechanisms of internal enquiries, has been quietly ignored, John Stalker has been lionised. Why did Stalker make such an easy hero? After all, he had been part of the problem for some time and even now, cannot be considered part of the solution. Stalkers' book contains no revelations or disclosures, nothing which threatens to dent the power of governments or even Greater Manchester Police.

Stalker is so patently believed because he has been a policeman and even though he is not one now, he is still near enough to being one to be wrapped within that aura of honesty which all policemen seem to earn without effort. But were we to listen carefully, we would no doubt hear awkward questions from lonely voices in the wastelands; did not John Stalker tacitly and actively support everything which the police in Greater Manchester did during his service there? Where was his painfully honest face when Jackie Berkley was tried for wasting

police time ? Where was his confident voice when Steven Shaw was screaming to be heard in a Longsight street ?

As Gordon Newman points out in **The Testing Ground**, senior police officers are inevitably compromised, for reasons of self-seeking and power, personality, and greed, and although they might find themselves embroiled in small private wars, at the end of the day, they usually keep their own counsel. Unfortunately, unlike the figures in our hopeless perception, they care next to nought for the more abiding values of natural justice, democracy freedom or equality.

John Stalker dared suggest that police officers shot suspects out of hand, for this he was first hounded and victimised then deified. Frank Logan dared to suggest that police officers had approached him about a burglary, for this he was put on trial. At the end of this seemingly endless maze of unaccountable and covert action, threats and counter threats, lies and yet more lies, we are not one jot nearer any truth.

We live in an age of conspiracies, a time when it is impossible to hold on to or articulate the truth with any lasting effect. A time during which existing and aspiring power groups have a vested interest in ensuring that the truth remains unspoken. It is a complex age, one full of cynics to whom 'truth' has become a term of derision, a comment upon the naive morality of a previous less knowledgeable period. Now, even 'the facts' are negotiated in the political and economic market place, the powers that be, hold it as a basic tenet that any continuous narrative of truth has to be fractured and disinherited.

Inhabiting a house built upon lies, we learn every day lessons in the reversibility of truth. A bizarre and arcane, byzantine world in which victims are hounded and terrorised. Where complainants become criminals and where those who whisper the truth are branded as corrupt. A world where for reasons of power and opportunism we are forced to perceive the police as the only symbols of an absolute purity; heroes or anti-heroes, incapable of bad, individually or institutionally. □

FEATURES

Sigh for Redemption

"The task to be accomplished is not the conservation of the past, but the redemption of the hopes of the past".
Adorno & Horkheimer.

The language of transcendence, of redemption, is not spoken by the Left. Spiritual needs are left to religion, to mysticism, and to the superstition-industries which are flourishing like never before: capital knows how to make faith pay; but the need for faith remains real, and capitalism can never be worthy of it.

Ian Sampson asks questions which go to the heart of the ideological impoverishment of the Left today: what are the social roots of the moral and spiritual needs expressed in religion ? Why should these real concerns be so often exploited for reactionary political ends ? Cannot an emancipatory reason help to interpret and express such yearnings rather than treating them as 'irrational' ?

A CONCERN WITH SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS IS NOT intended as an esoteric flight into other-worldly speculation. My aim in considering the concept of redemption is not to suggest how we can all be redeemed, but rather, to see in the concept an expressed wish, even need, which is at the same time both beyond politics but also useful to an understanding of how spiritual concerns are at the foundation of aspirations for social change. There is an implicit rejection here of the interventionist role of the activist/intellectual as well as any notion of permanent revolution which underlie much of the thought of the left - including many libertarians. What I hope to show here is that a consideration of the concept of redemption, in a metaphorical sense, is of importance to the way we might respond by way of political action in an age which no longer has a politicised public sphere.

The Christian seeks redemption from annihilation through Christ, for western civilisation as a whole, it is through a powerful association

with the idea of homecoming that human beings seek to be redeemed. At the root of this notion is the idea of a return to something more dependable and secure than is found in one's alienated experience of the world. The dependability is ultimately other people, it is social integration which gives us meaning as individuals. In order, therefore, to comprehend fully the relationship between spirituality expressed here in terms of redemption, a starting point has to be the social nature of human beings. From this we can see how the demand for integration and security manifests itself in spiritual needs (i.e. not reducible to biological criteria).

Such needs are emergent properties - cultural in nature. They are the outcome of praxis, the way people reproduce themselves socially in their struggle with the natural world. This process results in the estrangement of subject (humanity) from object (nature). The outcome are needs rooted in the desire to overcome such an alienated condition. Taking redemption metaphorically as an idea of homecoming we can

see that the home to which western civilisation wishes to return is that of a unity with nature. In Jewish and Christian religions the Fall is the expression of this estrangement, with redemption a return to a state of grace before the Fall.

This idea of former perfection and its loss can be found in many examples in history: Odysseus's search for Ithaca, his homeland, and the wanderings before reaching it; the anti-urban and anti-industrialism of the Romantic movement, who sought home in an idealized rural idyll and the simple life; for Marx too there are eschatological undertones in his idea in the historical progress of universality resulting in a communist, unalienated homeland. In a more sinister way Nazi ideology also appealed to the idea of redemption in its mythical 'volkgemeinschaft.'

In all of these cases nature is seen as something pure, while culture as something essentially corrupted. This is the 'discontent' that Freud spoke of, yet in his case needs were reduced to a biological level, with discontent arising out of the suppression of the pleasure principle in favour of the reality principle.² Here it is suggested rather that spiritual needs although perhaps initially instinctually motivated as emergent properties are therefore not reducible to instincts. Neither is this discontent the expression of an existential search for the human essence, the pristine state to which we seek redemption is that of a community in which the individual feels at home with collective. It is from this that a whole number of spurious myths have sprung.

Redemption, however, has always been more than just the ends; homecoming implies not only a journey towards something but also a journey away from something else. This too can be seen in the examples given above. Redemption contains a messianic rejection of the existing world and seeks in its 'destruction' a return to perfection and harmony. The need for redemption springs, therefore, not only from the hope for a mimesis with nature, but also of fears of impending catastrophe which have resulted from that loss.³ The result has often been millenarian movements fearing and yet seeking the end of the world.

It is here that the mythical ideas associated with the concept of redemption can be seen. Both established and heretical religious beliefs are clear examples, the Nazi myths are another. Both types of ideas seek to establish the conditions under which redemption can be seen to have taken place. Both emphasize a (false) sense of security, misappropriating expressions of integration, authenticity and moral values. It is because the idea of redemption is amenable to such mythical representations that it is a morally ambiguous concept. Any politics which aims to offer redemption is bound to fail; the death camps which remain as indelible pock marks in Europe's history and space, and the killing fields of Cambodia stand as testimony to this. Yet because such ideologies mis-represent the need for social integration does not mean that it should be rejected. Rather it is by grounding spirituality and religious feelings on the level of socially produced needs, that they themselves are redeemed. However badly this need for security may be expressed it remains as a longing, a "homesickness".⁴

This desire for redemption remains today, even if it is not always expressed as such. The future often appears in the public imagination as a choice between annihilation, technocratic domination, or the narcissistic self-absorption in a privatised world.⁵ However 'faith' continues to be an important part in people's lives, as can be seen by the huge following and interest in astrology, palmistry, and other mythical beliefs. That all of these replace the capacity to reason, and the uncertainties that that brings, with a conviction in the uncontrollable whims of fate, stands more as a testimony to the failure of reason to account for spiritual feelings, than the weakness of the human imagination. It goes without question that we would want to challenge this misplaced faith and see it as yet another ideological distortion, yet what is beyond challenge is the presupposition of security and certainty needed by people in the form of explanation.

This brings us to a dilemma; how to recognise the need for redemption in its social context and arm it with a critique of existing conditions and a moral consistency which can take us beyond myth into a more rational and equitable way of living. Social integration based on such principles of Enlightenment is surely the basis of a more meaningful existence. The politics involved should be concerned with the inability of a consumer society to meet the moral concerns and spiritual values which demand more than temporary gratification in the form of the commodity.

In a number of respects what I have implied by using the concept of redemption in this way, is an essential conservatism in human nature. I accept this, yet do not rule out the possibility of change and a radical reshaping of society which better conforms to meeting the demands of reason and human needs. There has always been a strongly conservative tradition within the radical movement: The Populist movements of the nineteenth century were a radical rejection of the dominant ideas of progress and a (conserve)ative appeal to communal ways and traditions. It found its voice among the Ricardian socialists and Luddites for example. Even now new social movements such as the Greens have inherited this populist and conservative tradition. Despite arguments which might be raised against some of the ideas of such movements, it remains consistent to argue that the support for tradition, community, equality and justice are compatible. It is what we might wish to conserve which is more at question.

We can suggest, therefore, that conservative desires are essentially utopian in nature, because they appeal directly to the level of needs and to retaining that which contemporary conditions of Capitalism seek to undermine. To retain conditions in which values of respect for others, tolerance, and mutual aid (all of which are social in nature) is an important part of the redeeming process. Even though change initiated by capital may be inevitable, the fight for something cherished on moral grounds involves a coming together of people in a spirit of co-operation and resistance, the role of the activist/intellectual is to attempt to show how the local and particular are really part of a general process; one determined by the needs of capital rather than the needs of individuals.⁶ It would be hoped that from this mediating (rather than intervening) role people may more clearly be able to perceive the difference in terms of integration experienced in resistance and that much more shallow satisfaction which comes from gratification/deprivation provided in a consumer society.

We must never lose sight of the fact that the desire for a better world rests in its goals and the methods for attaining them, and not simply the fight. We cannot expect, nor should we wish for, millenarian solutions. What we can do is accept that spirituality, rooted in a materialist view of the world, is essential to our project and to the human condition. Not only does this remove morality from a voluntaristic position, but also suggests, through concepts such as redemption, the possibility of redeeming a politicised public sphere from a condition of stasis. □

1 Adorno T W & Horkheimer M *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. pXV. Verso, London 1979.

2 Freud S, *Civilisation and its Discontents* Pelican Freud Library Vol. 12 Harmondsworth, 1985.

3 Rabinbach A, Benjamin, Bloch and Modern Jewish Messianism *New German Critique* No. 34 Winter 1985.

4 *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Passim).

5 See for Example: Lasch C, *Culture of Narcissism* Abacus 1980. Sennett R, *The Fall of Public Man* Faber and Faber 1986 London.

6 Touraine A, *The Voice and the Eye* Cambridge 1981.

Letters

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ART-ATTACK.

Stewart's letter (H&N No 6), correctly identifies Art as co-opted into the capitalist spectacle, showing its relationship to its own reified past, and the constant leapfrogging of new art movements, one over the back of the other. When the SI claimed that art ended with Dada and the Surrealists, it was because these movements tried to supersede art while remaining largely within the arts sub-culture, and failed. It was also perhaps because the revolutionary project was seen to have failed in both Berlin and Spain, that a renewal of theory did not occur and Surrealism degenerated into mystical idealism.

The project to destroy 'Art' ended with Dada and the Surrealists, ordinary Art, as "a social process under capitalism" did of course continue, albeit wearing some of the gory remains of Surrealism.

When Vaneigem, and Debord talked about 'realising and suppressing' art, they were not talking about one single 'Art', but about superseding the forms of art identified by Stewart, and instigating an "art" that cannot become a commodity, an "art" that will never become co-opted by the spectacle because it comes directly from the 'consciousness of constraint', and manifests itself not on a stage or on canvas, but in everyday life.

I think Frank Discussion says it quite neatly. "What can be said on a canvas that can't be said much better by an action? The whole idea of so-called 'revolutionary sentiments' painted on canvas.....can any of that compare in meaning to the actions of that shopping mall worker who reset a big department store alarm system so that all the lights went off and the doors closed at four o'clock in the afternoon - peak shopping time - with burglar alarms going off puncturing the Muzak? For a while he had hundreds of bewildered shoppers caught in a trap of their own desires."

That sort of poetic action, that does not even call itself art, is what the SI meant by 'realising' art, and can hardly be called 'transcendent' of Vaneigem's florid and millennialist writing style is a little over the top! Perhaps it is not the "SI's inability to understand art", (it was after all the point of departure for their critique of the nature of modern-day society) but Stewart's inability to understand some of the concepts used by the SI.

Dave, Stratford-on-Avon.

IS HOME WHERE THE ART IS...?

I want to make a few remarks in reply to Stewart Home's Letter in H&N 6, in which he makes several criticisms of my piece in issue 5. Home refers to Roger Taylor's book *Art, an Enemy of the People* and he points out, via Taylor, that the category 'art' is a bourgeois construction employed as a means of conferring status upon objects and activities which represent the interests of the ruling class. Home suggests that 'It is an idealist illusion to imagine...that art can fulfil any critical function, beyond the overturning of previous artistic traditions.' I have myself used Taylor's work - cf. *Variant 5, Summer/Autumn 1988* - to argue for the destruction of the art institution and I therefore accept Home's criticism up to a point. However, in the H&N 5 piece I was attempting to argue that the area called 'art' should be filled not with artefacts which are little more than signifiers of Fashion but with 'meanings' which challenge the ideologies which comprise Capitalism. This would need to take the admittedly paradoxical form of an attack on the art institution itself. The line of my thinking was not a little convoluted since what I had in mind implies something like a reappraisal of the idea of the 'Real Artist', insofar as that figure is supposed to stand for some kind of refusal of Fashion, dominant mores etc. One is really thinking in terms of someone who does something for the love of the activity itself, not for the gains to be made in terms of fame, status, wealth, i.e. the rewards given to artists if they are successful in Capitalist society. The art world is precisely choc-a-bloc with careerist conformists whose heads are, it seems, full of completely conventional ideas about churning out a lot of commodities (for which read Works of Art). Commodities are things made for none-too-difficult consumption. They are not objects made for their own sake. I was attempting in the H&N essay to bring back that idea. I don't think I explained myself sufficiently there; it perhaps is, as Home says, 'idealist' to hope that 'art' could be (re)inscribed with a critical (i.e. nonconformist) signification. But it does appear that there are, historically, challenges to, or at least refusals of 'Capitalism' which have emanated from practices bracketed by the term 'art'. From the position I'm crudely outlining most of what fills contemporary art galleries should not have the word 'art' affixed to it because I'm selecting a particular aspect of that word's province, and emphasising that with regard to a redefinition/recuperation of the term. From this perspective I would

have to call the work of the 'serious amateur' 'art' and consider most of the stuff that's actually now viewed as art as it is today produced 'commercial painting' or whatever...It's really a case of stressing creativity over consumption of commodities, advocating particularity as a value to be defended in the face of an homogenising (mass) culture.

This is something like saying that certain features or aspects of 'art', features which can hardly be said to be prominent in today's art world because that world is one of Business, should be defended. By extension, I am claiming that certain 'bourgeois' values are worth defending in the context of credit culture consumerism. I, for one, prefer the relatively structured (so-called bourgeois) subject to the pop or schizoid subject who lacks the reflexivity and discrimination which would afford him, or her, some kind of distance from mass culture norms. Home cites Taylor's 'art is bourgeois' claim as though it automatically followed that 'bourgeois is bad'. Now I'm not saying its not but what is Home suggesting - that one 'forget' or otherwise eradicate several centuries of history, i.e. all things 'bourgeois'?

This brings me, finally, to a couple of other points. Home doesn't like 'art' and I can see why. But don't certain of Home's activities - the promotion of the notion of plagiarism, multiple names ('Karen Eliot' - see back issues of *Variant, Smile* and related publications), the showing of objects in art galleries and the like - don't these activities reinforce 'art', whether or not Home intends his activities as a critique of, or attack upon the art institution? 'Anti-art' is as much 'art' as 'art' art, and is marketed in the same shops. I can't see how plagiarism results in any kind of changes that aren't already on the agenda, since both the French Academy and friends (Deconstruction), and Capitalism 'in its own right' promote the taking to bits of the 'bourgeois' individual as if to make the world a better place.

Peter Suchin.



LEFT OUTSIDE

Recurrent throughout John Alexander's article "*The New Liberals*" was an essential negative/positive logic coinciding with the balance of power i.e. those who have (Right) and those who have not (Left). Caught within this binary division, the Left will always be defined negatively in opposition, always the "other", "not having". As long as the Left perceives itself as a movement striving towards gaining what the Right appears to have sole rights over, this Power Game will not end. The "present feebleness" of the parliamentary Left may be a result of its insistence to attack the Right on its own ground, at the expense of developing strategies on and around Left territories. Its refusal to recognise the potential of the diversified power within (or with/out) its boundaries is typical of a movement which regards itself as a unified entity. If the Left was to surrender this illusion of "oneness" to a plurality of power positions which make up the "masses", it could launch an attack from all fronts (Feminist, Black, Gay) and escape this binary closure. Of course, it would have to fight its own battles first.

anon.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Laure Akai-N, in *Here & Now* 6, writing in response to the article '*Gift against Commodity*' (H&N 5), makes the point that in spending money to purchase a gift one is actually 'sacrificing' money in order to obtain "an emotional commodity, the *Person* as commodity", and that one can therefore say that the affection one has for another person can be equated with one's willingness to sacrifice.

Whilst I think this is an interesting point I feel that it is important to distinguish between one's willingness to sacrifice money and the sacrifice that might be said to inevitably accompany any human interaction.

The article '*Gift against Commodity*' was concerned primarily with the way in which human relationships are undermined and mediated by the "intervention of an external and arbitrary measure of 'value' - money", and it concentrated particularly on the relationship which

exists between the giver and receiver of a gift.

With the intervention of this 'fixed' measure of 'value' from outside, the value of the commodity is no longer governed by the relationship but, on the contrary, the 'value' of the relationship is governed by the commodity. In this sense it could be said that the participants in a transaction of gift-exchange become commodities themselves, and one often hears the phrase 'buying friendship' used when an inappropriately expensive gift is offered, for example. There is a 'standard of generosity' which must be lived up to, as pointed out in the letter, and as a consequence, gifts which appear too cheap or too expensive can cause embarrassment and upset the balance of the relationship. It is no longer enough to give; one must also ensure that 'the price is right'.

However, Laure Akai-N appears to be suggesting that sacrifice in terms of exchange-value has always implicitly been at the centre of gift-giving, whereas, despite examples which would appear to support this contention, there is a tradition of gift-giving and receiving as old as history whose central purpose has been rather to create and cement relationships of mutualism and reciprocity.

We must be able to clearly separate the concepts of 'giving' and 'buying' and hold on to those values which are not created in and determined by the market place. Similarly, we must recognise the growing importance of exchange-value in gift exchange for what it is - the creeping displacement of human-centred values by those of price.

Deborah Jenkins

HAS LABOUR BEEN 'RUMBLLED'?

By-Elections are fundamentally different from choosing Governments at General Elections. This is a fact that I've just 'rediscovered' as a citizen of the Govan Constituency in Glasgow where Jim Sillars overturned a 'safe' Labour seat with a 33% swing in November.

At first it wasn't easy to detect - the 'sea change of opinion' that has "opened the door of opportunity" for Scottish self-determination. Around the shops, in the streets and (more unusually) canvassing as an activist in the local anti-poll tax group, I thought that the predominate mood was 'they're all the same'/'it makes nae difference' and other populist Baudrillardian and vulgar anarchist sentiment. For the politically initiated (and there is still a working class tradition up here and pensioners that accost you with memories of John McLean or the elder Maxton), a 'public sphere' suddenly appeared with hustings every night targetted to various themes. TV Coverage was serious

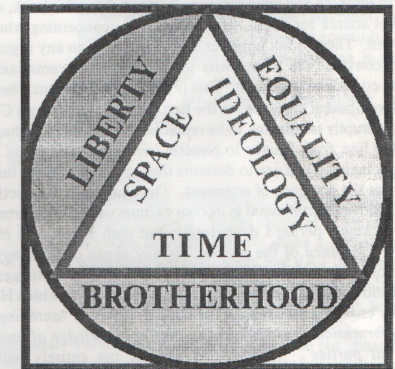
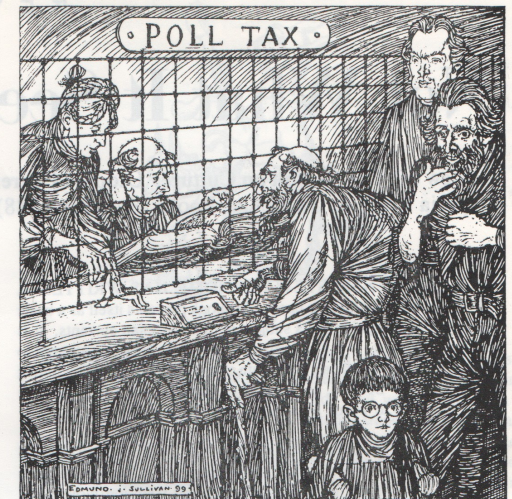
rather than frivolous & particular focus was made on meetings with angry mothers telling the candidates ("Mr Tory, shut up & listen.") how hard drugs were disabling the young - missing out that drink was probably incapacitating 'their men'.

Politics was being discussed more, many issues threw up sharp contrasts between the candidates. Minority views such as the Greens and the CP (stalinist social democrats) were widely disseminated, although the deluge of literature probably contributed more to Guy Fawkes night than any other cause. The SNP leaflets got craftier as the Campaign progressed emphasising the futility of sending another Labour dumpling to Westminster, the socialist conviction of Jim Sillars and the equivocation of Strathclyde's ruling party over Poll Tax opposition. What struck home was the apparent credibility of Sillars charge that Labour was conniving to perpetuate defeatism and the depoliticisation of would-be citizens whose hopes had been raised of effective opposition to force a Scottish Assembly on to the political agenda and for mobilisation to challenge the implementation of the Poll Tax.

A TV debate 3 days before voting exposed the limitations of Labour and the insult that the Labour Candidate "was one of us" as a misguided media pundit had dared to suggest. "We're no that stupid" seems to have been the popular response! This brought about a result that revealed the following statistics: the 3 'Major' Parliamentary Parties only got 50% of the vote; 93% of the vote was against the polltax, and 32% supported breaking the law as a campaign of mass non-payment; and that only 21% supported maintaining the United Kingdom against majority support for Scottish autonomy or minority belief in national separation.

The Election is less likely to be an overnight sensation because it ushers in a period where the Party of Government and the form of government is seen as having no mandate and lacking legitimacy. There is growing hope that Scots will realise 'the game is up' for Labour and a definite stimulus has indirectly been given to the dozens of local anti poll tax groups linked by Strathclyde and east of Scotland Federations whose ambition doesn't rely on the "Can Pay: Won't Pay" restriction of the SNP hierarchy. What the Scots will be offered is an "All-Party Convention" to Campaign for a Scottish Assembly. In this traditional script the people remain as spectators. If the message of Sillars isn't to implode as empty rhetoric, the example of challenging depoliticisation and reaching for real self-determination (as Solidarnosc originally achieved in Poland) is the agenda that has to be proclaimed and pursued.

Jim McFarlane.



An Imaginary Museum of Revolution 1789 - 1989

200 monuments, statues that are conveyors of information about 200 revolutions from the last three centuries from throughout the world assembled in one place

reproduced on slightly larger than human scale by means of new techniques

lofty monuments made intimate which can be touched, listened to, to rediscover forgotten meanings

adjoined by miniature versions of these monuments, sold in vending machines which can be held and moved like chess pieces on the board of history

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the dramatized presentation of revolutionary moments from three centuries of world history with instant access by means of compact information carriers

a conjunction of library, museum and amusement arcade:
The Imaginary Museum of Revolution

Not What It Seems

Review of "The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents From Lettrisme To Class War" by Stewart Home (Aporia Press & Unpopular Books: London 1988)

IN ONE SENSE, STEWART HOME HAS WRITTEN A profoundly misleading book. The book presents itself as a basic introductory guide to its subject matter: utopian currents. It is nothing of the sort. It is a polemic on two fronts. First, an attempt to claim a heritage which can legitimate current art practices (including Home's own). Second, an attempt to specify within that heritage those elements to which he attaches the greatest importance.

The form of the book does not make this clear. The catch-all title and the impressively detailed contents list suggest the book is going to establish a continuity of purpose, a dissident tradition/movement/sensibility. All that happens in the text is that we are given a chronology, little more than a list, of events which have happened under the auspices of the various '-isms' presented to us. There is an impressive amount of research and information gathering behind this book, and it is a useful source for detail, indeed for trivia, concerning who did what, when. There is not however any theory or even any argument trying to convince the reader why the sequence of events laid out should be considered a current. This is particularly evident when the line of development discussed in the first eight chapters, from Cobra to the SI, abruptly terminates, to be replaced in the remaining chapters by another line, from Fluxus to Neoism (with Punk and Class War entering at tangents). Even to describe these as two coherent lines is to overstate the presence of argument. The chapter form effectively puts each movement/moment in its own vacuum sealed compartment: what is lacking - perhaps deliberately, but then at the cost of the objective coherence of the project - is any sense of teleology, of direction or end/purpose. This failing has allowed those reviewers, in the NSS and the NME, with no sense of the polemics in which Home is actually engaging, to trivialise his book as a sort of "anthology of bits of information to enable you to bluff a knowledge of utopian currents at parties". Worse, this view is not entirely without foundation.

If Home is taken to be engaging in specific arguments, what stance is he taking? On the first question, concerning the project of establishing a lineage or genealogy which legitimates one's own current practice, this has always seemed to me a spectacularly wrong-headed approach for those attempting rebel/radical/revolutionary attacks on the dominant tradition: because the ultimate rationale of the project can only be the claim that "what I am doing is legitimate because it stands in an organic tradition whose precursors I can identify" - the kind of paternity squabble of interest only to would-be monarchs or the lazy-minded who wish to evade the fundamental problem: even if what you are doing is clearly derived from the teachings of Mao or Lenin or Warhol or McLaren, does that make it right? Even if Morley was applying McLarenesque tactics, that doesn't mean every person impressed by the Sex Pistols scam has to applaud Frankie Goes To Hollywood. The apotheosis of this kind of nonsense was Genesis P. Orridge's soliciting of a 'reference' from William S. Burroughs that the former was a legitimate artist engaged in a cultural tradition derived from Tristan Tzara. Why was such a statement necessary? For the purpose of achieving Arts Council sponsorship, of course!

MAD FASHIONS, OD FASHIONS, All out of Fashions, OR, The Emblems of these Distracted times.

By John Taylor.



L O N D O N,
Printed by John Hammond, for Thomas Baskin, 1842.

The second issue is more substantial, as it is here that Home actually does have an argument to make. The radical tradition, which he is not the first to identify, includes the Surrealists. Home does not like the Surrealists, or, more specifically, he does not like Andre Breton. So little does he like the Surrealists, that he only grudgingly allows them admission to the tradition on the basis of the one principle he insists on: their paternity claim. Analytically, he would expel them. So, he says, "if Surrealism had been a movement in its own right, rather than a degeneration from Dada, any claim that it belongs within the Utopian tradition would be open to question." (p5) In a provocative comparison, he likens Breton's influence to that of Stalin, a towering presence which had to be disposed of before progress could be made.

I disagree with this estimate of the value of Breton's influence - on the basis that the comparison is not intended to flatter! In his opinion, Home stands in a long line of commentators guilty of the same error. As M. Sheringham observed in the TLS 1125, "It has long been routine to condescend somewhat to Breton, and to be superior about his relations with the movement he launched and then animated through thick and thin for 40 years. Surrealism is likened to a banana republic, with Breton as its crackpot dictator, or to schism, with Breton as its heresiarch...and other tiresome misrepresentations". This caricature of Surrealism has also been recently contested by David Gascoyne, commenting on the Surrealists' series of ten committee meetings in Oct/Nov 1925 (TLS 1126): "the sobriety, coherence and discipline characterising the many motions, resolutions and communiqués reported are such as to astound and confute all those still inclined to think of the Surrealists as a group intent above all on flabbergasting the bourgeoisie with their eccentric antics. The topics they discussed were typical of what were to be the central pre-occupations of would-be revolutionary intellectuals for the following 40 years". It is this side of the Surrealist project which would be taken up by the Situationists.

But the point I wish to pursue here is Home's unwitting and irrelevant transposition of the terms of a Parisian debate into the English language context. If we move from the value of Breton's influence to its extent, Home's Francocentric terms of reference make him assume that Breton's influence in France - towering - is universally true. In fact, much of the work of Breton and 'orthodox' Surrealism has not even made it into English yet, and much of that we do have is due only to the efforts of small presses like Atlas. Contrast this with the influence exercised in English language contexts by, and the extent of English translation of, those associated with Surrealism who broke with or were expelled from the Breton group: Artaud and Bataille are the most obvious, and Lacan is also relevant. Consider the next generation - those who defined themselves against Breton, like Sartre and Camus (Camus's '**The Rebel**' in English translation revealingly omitted the discussion of Surrealism in the French original as 'too esoteric for the English reader'). All have had their moment in the spotlight this side of the Channel. Breton has always been a marginal figure in an English language context, and Home's incomprehension here only serves to confuse.

Thus far the flaws in Home's book, taken literally. However, in another sense, Home's book is profoundly illuminating. It illuminates not the tradition of utopian currents which is its apparent subject matter, but Home's own practice at the art/theory interface. Read as a commentary on Home's '**Smile**' project, the book clarifies several points of interest, starting with the Richard Allen pastiches which have puzzled some of the '**Smile**' readership. Home's persistent resort to irony even insinuates itself into the apparently straightfaced 'Utopian Currents' book in his utterly fatuous use of italics for emphasis, a hilarious pastiche of the Debord style. This self-awareness exhibited by Home leads me to think that he may be able to develop the disturbing possibility in Debord's work to which I have alluded. This sense of irony is what distinguishes Home's '**Smile**' project from the earlier pro-situ milieu of the early/mid 1970's, and, in the clear implication that he is aware that the contemporary conditions for the practice of critique do not allow mere following in our forerunners' footsteps (and all the contradictions this phrase implies), this is what allows me to see in his work a project with which the Third Assault perspective could fruitfully co-operate.



No. 76. *Want of Harmony over the Pot.*

This intelligent irony is evidently also the source of the real irritation which Home inspires in some readers. This is easily understandable with reference to those who would see themselves as the 'bearers of the true flame' of a no longer tenable project, but it also seems to affect some who see themselves as involved in the renewal of the critical project. I am referring not least to some of those formerly involved in the Pleasure Tendency project, whose dissolution has not apparently diminished their influence over the selection of priorities for the W. Yorks Discussion Group, and thence to the pages of **Here And Now** itself. I make this point explicitly to re-assert the 'open forum' which '**Here And Now**' ought to embody against the over-emphases on these pages resulting from the preferences of this caucus for matters Polish and Salisbury Review-ish, and concomitant vetoes on more positive attitudes towards matters as varied as Stewart Home's project and contemporary radical feminism of the Dworkin/MacKinnon variety, in the knowledge that this dissenting opinion speaks both for several participants in the discussion group, and for several who have become former participants due to this unfortunate development.

Angus McDonald Third Assault

Larry Law

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the death of Larry Law last year. Although we never met, I was in correspondence with him on and off for over eight years - since I was 16 years old - and always found his advice and analysis encouraging. After leaving school at 16, he had several political plays produced before turning to teaching and later working as a welfare officer at a higher education college in Reading. Readers of **Here and Now** will probably best remember him as the producer of **Buffo**, a collection of anarchic pranks, **Misson and Libertatia** and over a dozen booklets in the **Spectacular Times Pocketbooks** series. In these he was a great populariser of ideas which too often tend to protect themselves by being immersed in complexity and his honest and down-to-earth handling of radical ideas will be sorely missed.

George Branchflower.

The «Secret Articles» of Guy Debord

Review of Guy Debord *Commentaires sur la Societe du Spectacle* (Champ Libre, 1988)

For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Luke 8:17

THE SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL ENJOYS A strange kind of notoriety: famous for its carefully cultivated obscurity, and condemned to an academic silence which nevertheless wants to pretend familiarity with its theses (you know the sort of thing: 'Oh, yes, everyone knows all about that')

Twenty years have gone under the bridge since the events which first brought the S.I. to the attention of those with the greatest interest in knowing about it: serious counter-revolutionaries no less than spurious revolutionaries. A definite **cachet** was easily wrapped around this cabal which had the arrogance to predict the unpredictable and claim it as the practical expression of its own ideas. The recent attempt to re-inter the S.I. in a theme park of 20th century avant-gardisms is only the latest in a series of funerals, designed, like all such rites, to give proof of its death (and thereby only serves to demonstrate that this proof is still felt to be necessary). These twenty years have, of course, seen the word 'Spectacle' trivialised into a mere sign from which the concept has been evaporated, while 'Situationism' has been indexed, filed, stored, and hedged around with superstitious **gossip**, so that it is impossible for Debord to escape the aura of his name in what passes for the 'history' of these times. So much has happened in the long and difficult process of putting the world back onto its head, that it would be impossible to expect from Debord's latest text anything approaching an **explanation** of these developments. These 'Commentaires' wisely eschew any claim to being a sequel, whilst offering, on the contrary, very much more than the simple afterthoughts that the title might suggest. Debord has never lacked an instinct for the ulterior (which is another way of saying that his writings are usually some steps ahead of the most immediate responses to them) and he knows exactly what it is no longer necessary - or **possible** - to say. What this book gives us, in fact, is a discourse upon **Secrecy**.

The Spectacular - the regime of autonomised appearances - has always presupposed secrecy as its foundation:

The generalised secret stands behind the spectacle, as the decisive complement of what it shows, and if one gets to the bottom of things, as its most important operation (p. 22)

But even this elementary fact has been beyond the grasp of the legions of commentators on 'the media' and its 'images', that is, those Debord would call the **specialists** who take the Spectacle entirely in its own terms. Hypnotised by its hype ('hyperreality') they want to ascend beyond 'truth' but only fail for the most patent falsehoods. Truth is an unfashionable category these days but there's a bull market in lying - with which it is not unconnected. What Debord calls "falsehood

without reply" is one of the constitutive features of contemporary culture, along with generalised secrecy, incessant technical renewal ("whatever can happen must happen"), and the disappearance of the past for the sake of a perpetual present promoted by those "who have wanted to make you forget what they are making happen". And the **opposition**? The "anaesthetists - reanimators of the spectacle...who try to be the enemy of the rhetoric of the spectacle (he names no names) but speak its syntax"

those who have the stupidity to believe that they can understand something, not by using what is hidden from them, but in believing what is revealed to them.

In today's world, which Debord calls the **integrated** Spectacle (a dialectical fusion of the 'concentrated' spectacle (totalitarian) and the 'diffuse' spectacle (democratic), a "new obscurantism" reigns in which secrecy, lying and fraud become normative. The Mafia, far from being the quasi-feudal anachronism to which proponents of progress had consigned it, "belongs perfectly in this world"; it becomes "the **model** of all commerce". And General Noriega "who pretends everything and sells everything" is "the prince of our times".



But this book is not a **denunciation**. It aims to spell out the "practical consequences" of the system which still holds the erstwhile "Left" in thrall. Reading this after bouncing between the trance-like paralysis of Baudrillard and the interminable vacuity of Stuart Hall is like suddenly finding some of the terms with which to **think**.

A large part of the text is based on drawing conclusions about 'terrorism' (those who have followed the correspondence with Sanguinetti over the latter's **Terrorism and the State** will find Debord has not retracted his earlier claims that the Red Brigades were operated by 'remote control' by the P2 network).

Terrorism is the only opposition the system can tolerate, and the former does all that is expected of it. "It is as if our democracy wants to be judged not by its results but by its enemies". Anyone who has taken the trouble to try to piece together the jigsaw of recent stories from the netherworld of intelligence and counter-subversion cannot fail to be impressed by Debord's claim that what is going on is a kind of "preventative civil war": as if the rulers of the world have decided to pre-empt the revolution in launching their counter-revolution early: as the strategists now say - get your retaliation in first:

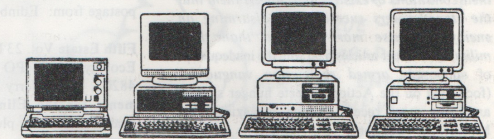
The aim of the integrated spectacle is that secret agents shall become revolutionaries and revolutionaries shall become secret agents.

There is much more in this short book, with its 33 numbered paragraphs and its "lures" and so called "secret articles" inserted into the text. There is the most lucid critique of that concept beloved by cold warriors: "Disinformation" - which Debord calls a **confusionist** concept: - (not surprisingly, he calls the pro-situs the "first disinformationists"). There is also a terminological discussion around the themes of leading astray and detournement that is meant for more than semantic clarification...but there is also a cryptic silence on the central political question of revolution. Between the lines, can one conclude that it is the revolutionary movement which "will work discreetly...conspiratorially"? **Mike Peters**

REVIEWS

Mythinformation

Review of some recent books on modern technology



THE COMPUTER WAVE OF THE EARLY 1980s WAS motivated from several different forces. Firstly, there was a fear of unemployment, as the remoulding of the workplace through computer simulation accelerated. Secondly, potential implications of a Japanese Government-backed technology program gave rise to fears for the future of the national economy. And thirdly, these fears were reshaped into a gospel of personal enterprise (for career advancement or for the children's future) and otherwise exploited by home micro entrepreneurs (whose own fears grew as it became apparent that they had saturated a general home market without generating the "needs" which would allow them to plan obsolescence). Much of the hysteria of that last aspect is well-described in Adamson and Kennedy's "**Sinclair and the 'Sunrise' Technology**" (Penguin, 1986).

That wave subsided and technological matters sank into the specialist presses, whether that for computer professionals or that for users of the nich-marketed machines which succeeded the general micros. What remains is hard to discern: a computer in every school and an attitude of "*It's necessary to be absolutely modern*" (familiar from the Benn-Wilson era), but does this amount to much in real life?

Some worry over the banalisation of true thought as the data processing model of the mind takes root in education. In his recent book "**The Cult of Information: The Folklore of Computers and the True Art of Thinking**" (Paladin, 1988), Theodore Roszak attacks the assumptions about "computer literacy" behind these policies, moving from counter-culture to a self-confessed "*humanist's conservative appeal in behalf of the arts and letters*".

Similar concerns re-emerge in "**QUESTIONING TECHNOLOGY: A Critical Anthology**" (Freedom Press, 1988), edited by John Zerzan

and Alice Carnes, but are placed in a context indicating a wider diagnosis of problem and solution. "*Realistic efforts at a solution*" it notes "*will be drastic*". The book consists of an editorial commentary linking a well-chosen selection of critical articles on aspects of technology, with the breadth familiar to readers of Zerzan's articles in **Fifth Estate**. The articles range from those seeing the entire history of technology as a mistaken wandering to those by critical computer scientists like Weizenbaum, and others specifying the actual conditions faced by workers in American microprocessor assembly plants and workplaces using computers.

One lingering effect of the computer wave is what Langdon Winner describes as *Mythinformation: the almost religious conviction that a widespread adoption of computers and communication systems...will almost automatically produce a better world for humanity*". Otherwise sane people can become unaccountably excited by networks amounting to little more than cross-border recipe transmission. As those with a **VIC 20** in the cupboard know, many advertised "users" of the micro are no more than a simulation of activities done more easily with paper and envelope. This aspect of the ideology of the age is well covered by "**Questioning Technology**".

Articles on this subject in **Here & Now 2** tried to stress developments in the actual placement of computerisation within the workplace: the relocation of labour across continents and into the computer, the fragmentation of the work process and neutralisation of conflict, and the contradictions which sometimes arise. While the book's "*Unplug Yourself From the System and Switch On Yourself*" exhortations risk understressing such process aspects, the demystifications in **Questioning Technology**" (probably the best book published by the postwar **Freedom Press**) are essential for a critique of the technological ideology-myth. **Alex Richards**

Listings

Le Brise-Glace: 10FF from BP 214, 75623 Paris Cedex 13, France, is the successor to *La Banquise*. Perhaps the name change indicates increased optimism...The main article in the first issue discusses the Palestinian *intifada*: "*Indirectly, the arab insurgents have thrown a new challenge to revolutionaries still obsessed with the military question. Their insurrection left the traditional organisations standing, taking 15 days to follow in their wake. That indicates the difference between action by groups grafted onto the social movement and the social movement proper...Violence is revolutionary not because it responds to statist violence by war but because it departs from the logic of the State's war. In building their struggle as much on their communitarian links as the position of some of them in the economy, the proletarians at the heart of the intifada remind us that the revolutionary weapon par excellence is the social relations, the revolt's detournement of social relations transmitted by tradition or imposed by capital. It is because they began from their conditions of existence to subvert them that the stonethrowers succeeded in disarming an enemy otherwise more powerful than them militarily.*" Other articles deal with the inadequacies of supposed "*armed proletarian vanguards*" (focussing on the Action Directe hunger strikes) and, like most recent French magazines, the Melanesian situation.

Echecs Situationnistes by Laura Romild and Jacques Vincent; 36FF from BP 357, 75968 Paris Cedex 20, France. A critique of the situationist project in theory and as practised in the years following the dissolution of the Situationist International. The authors criticise a milieu turned in on itself, which used the funds available to it (through the publishing house *Editions Champ Libre*) only to reproduce, celebrate and mythologise its own past, and advertise the intransigence of its own lifestyle, "*equivalent in culture and mentality to a kind of Albania*".

A Contre-Courant No. 1 15F from: BP 1666, Centre Monnaie, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Across Frontiers: news from Eastern Europe. From: PO Box 2382 Berkeley, CA 94702, USA

Alternative Gallery: Bibliographic listing of international anarchist press. Stamps/donation to: PO Box 20037, Athens GR-11810, Hellas (Greece)

Anarchy: 'A Journal of Desire Armed' No. 16 on Pornography, Spirituality, Native Indian guerrillas. Donation to C.A.L. PO Box 146 Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA

Anti-Parliamentary Communism 1917-45 by Mark Shipway, and **Non-Market Socialism in the 19th centuries** (MacMillan) by Maximilien Rubel & John Crump; worth getting into your local library.

Bulletin of Anarchist Research No. 14 (on books/academic projects) £4/£6 sterling subs from: T.V. Cahill, Dept. of Politics, Univ. of Lancaster, LA1 4YP

Clydeside Resistance Nos 1-3: agitational broadsheet against the Poll Tax. Stamps or donation c/o Clydeside Press

Come Dungeon Dark: the Life and Times of Guy Aldred, Glasgow Anarchist: by J.T. Caldwell. Out at last: £6.95; available in bookshops or direct from Luath Press, Forest Bank, Barr, Ayrshire, Scotland.

Counterinformation Nos. 20 & 21 with concurrent features on E.T., Poll Tax, Poland, and 'resistance worldwide'. Stamps/donation to P/H C.Info. 11 Forth St., Edinburgh, Scotland

Discussion Bulletin No. 31 from: PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501, USDA (donation)

The Echo of Time by Jacques Camatte. Limited edition for groups of less than two persons (!) Donation to: Unpopular Books, Box 15, 138 Kingsland High St., London E8 (who also distribute Stewart Home **The Assaults on Culture**, Jean Barrot **What is Situationism?** and Camatte's **Capital & Community**: £3.50, £1, & £4.50 respectively)

Edinburgh Review Double Issue 80-81 on 'Central Europe and its Periphery'. £4.95 plus postage from: Edinburgh University Press.

Fifth Estate Vol. 23 No. 1 & 2: critique of 'Deep Ecology'; from PO Box 02548, Detroit, MI 48202, USA: Jerry Mander's book **Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television** is available for \$8 plus postage from the F.E. bookstore

Fingeren No. 18 (in Danish) 76pp: from Autonomt Plenum, Rosenkrantzgade 3, 8000, Aarhus, Denmark

France - Winter 86/87: an attempt at autonomous organisation: from **Echanges et Mouvement** BM Box 91, London WC1N 3XX. Stamps/donation

Green Perspectives: a Left Green Publication from PO Box 111, Burlington, Vermont 05402. Sub. \$10 for 10 issues (monthly). No. 10 Sept. 1988: 'Yes! Whither Earth First?': critique of 'Deep Ecology' by Murray Bookchin; No. 11 Oct. 1988: 'What is Social Ecofeminism?' by Janet Biehl

International Blacklist Soon to be republished from: **Bound Together**, 1369 Haight St., San Francisco, USA

Kick it Over No. 21: focus on Guatemalan activism; Renovating Fatherhood, 75p plus post; from PO Box 5811, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1PT

Lev-Lap Eco-libertarian new magazine from Budapest. No address.

Lutter No. 24. Libertarian Communist magazine. 10F plus post; from BP 602, 75530, Paris Cedex 11, France

Noir et Rouge No. 9. From Chez Felix, 65 Rue Bichat, 75010 Paris.

On Gogol Boulevard: 151 First Avenue, 62 New York, NY 10003, USA: magazine committed to underground civil society, East and West

None Shall Escape: Radical Perspectives in the Caribbean by Fundi (Caribbean Situationist), and **Towards a History of Workers' Resistance to Work:** Paris & Barcelona during the French Popular Front & the Spanish Revolution, 1936-38, by Michael Seidman. Both published in July 1988 by **NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE**, Box 14, 136 Kingsland High St. London E8. Radical Perspectives in the Caribbean was first published in **No Middle Ground**, San Francisco, 1984. (A tape of the 'None Shall Escape' album is available from Box 14 at the above address, price £1.50). Also available:

Modern Times: a theoretical journal, including articles on housing, new technology etc. 40p

News from Everywhere: chronology of class struggle around the world from January to July 1987 (illustrated) 50p

News From Everywhere Bulletin: leaflets & articles on DHSS strike, Irangate, Iran/Iraq war, radical youth versus Basque nationalism, critique of housing co-ops, poll tax. Published June 1988, 50p

A Day Mournful and Overcast: an ex-convict member of the Iron Column tells of his experiences in the Spanish civil war. 45p

Socialism in Quotation Marks: a pamphlet by Keith Sorel, deflating certain Leftist myths about the Sandinista state. 25p (All prices inclusive of postage)

Processed World No. 22, summer 1988. \$20 non-US sub. From 41 Sutter St. @1829, San Francisco, CA 94104, USA. Articles on pollution. Chaz Bufe criticizes 'Deep Ecology' & Lucius Cabins 'Dollars and Ecology' examines the greening of capitalism.

Subversion/Wildcat: Majority & Minority magazines arising from 'Wildcat Group' split. Available at 40p/50p plus post from Box W, Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester and BM Cat, London WC1N 3XX respectively

Traffik No. 28 (Internationales Journal zur libertären Kultur und Politik) 75DM plus post from Eduardstrasse 40, 4330 Mulheim, Federal Republic of Germany.

Variant No. 5: 'The Subversive Past' of Art. £1.40 plus post from Data Attic, 37 Union St., Dundee, Scotland

Ukrainian Peace News. Vol II No. 4. 70p available from 168/10 King Street, London W6 0QU. Articles on Nationalist Movements of Soviet Bloc.

Workers' City: The Real Glasgow Stands Up. £2.95 plus post from Clydeside Press, 37 High St., Glasgow G1: Against Enterprise Culture/Culture City/Labourism

Lobster No. 17 Journal of Parapolitics. 214 Westbourne Avenue, Hull. HU5 3JB. UK.

I, Claudia. Feminism Unveiled. £1.20. BM Claudia. London WC1 3XX. A Class Whore Publication.

Insurrection Issue 4: 'Beyond the Structure of Synthesis' and other Italian neo-anarchist articles & pictorial features. £1 plus post from BM Elephant, London WC1N 3XX

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EASTERN EUROPEAN SUPPLEMENT

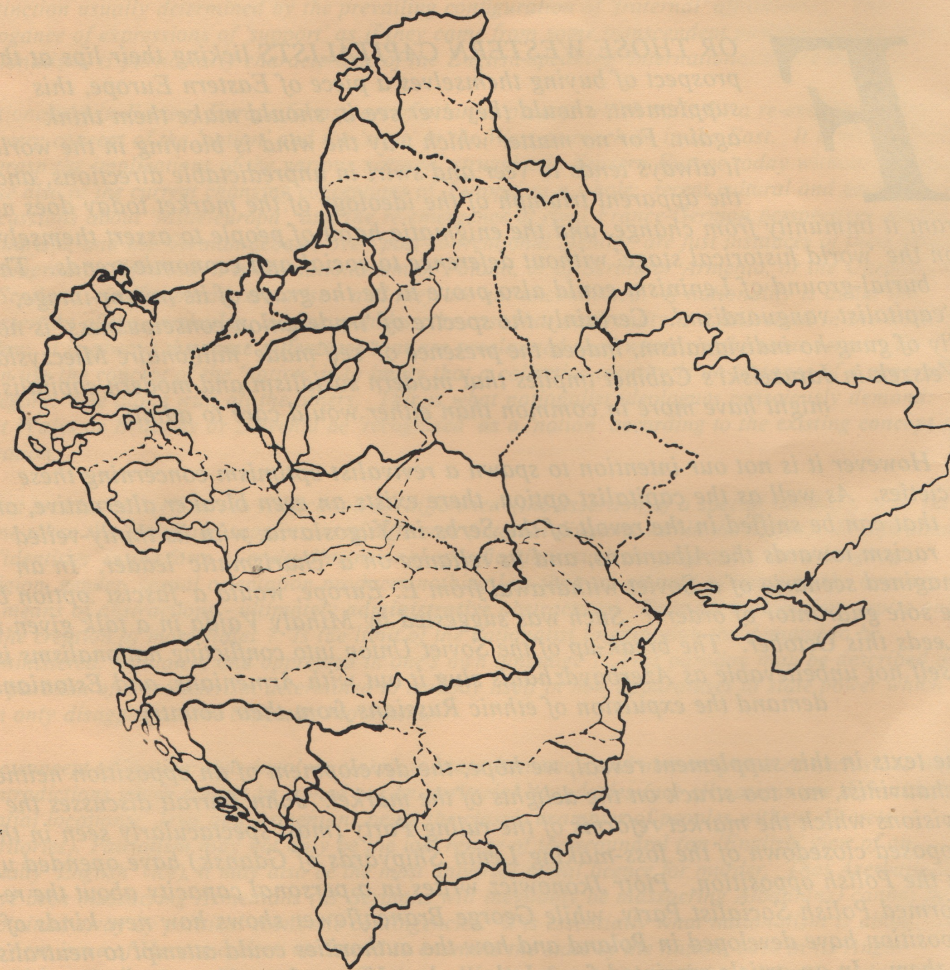
FOR THOSE WESTERN CAPITALISTS licking their lips at the prospect of buying themselves a piece of Eastern Europe, this supplement, should they ever see it, should make them think again. For no matter which way the wind is blowing in the world it always tends to veer and swirl in unpredictable directions, and the apparent triumph of the ideology of the market today does not grant it immunity from change, and the enigmatic habit of people to assert themselves on the 'world historical stage' without deference to social and economic trends. The burial-ground of Leninism could also prove to be the grave of its mirror-image, 'capitalist vanguardism'. Certainly the spectre of 'trade-union consciousness' is no ally of gung-ho individualism, indeed the presence of 'self-made' millionaire Mieczyslaw Welszek in Jaruzelski's Cabinet implies that modern socialism and modern capitalism might have more in common than either would care to admit.

However it is not our intention to spawn a revivalist optimism concerning these societies. As well as the capitalist option, there exists an even bleaker alternative, one that can be sniffed in the revolt of the Serbs in Yugoslavia, with its thinly-veiled racism towards the Albanians, and its reliance on a 'charismatic' leader. In an imagined scenario of a Soviet withdrawal from E. Europe, would a 'fascist' option be the sole guarantor of order? Such was suggested by Mihaly Vajda in a talk given in Leeds this October. The break-up of the Soviet Union into conflicting nationalisms is itself not unbelievable as Azerbaydzhanis slug it out with Armenians, and Estonians demand the expulsion of ethnic Russians from their country.

The texts in this supplement reveal, we hope, the development of an opposition neither chauvinist, nor too struck on the delights of the market. John Barratt discusses the divisions which the market reforms of the ruling Party (most spectacularly seen in the proposed closedown of the loss-making Lenin Shipyards of Gdansk) have opened up in the Polish opposition. Piotr Jkonowicz writes in a personal capacity about the reformed Polish Socialist Party, while George Branchflower shows how new kinds of opposition have developed in Poland and how the authorities could attempt to neutralise them. In an article reprinted from *Independent Voices from Yugoslavia* Tomaz Mastnak discusses the hegemony of the military, while in case anyone thought that reform is fashionable throughout the Bloc, Martin Hammond exposes the neanderthal policies of the most unreconstructed Stalinist left, Nicolai Ceausescu of Rumania, one time darling of the West. We conclude with details of various campaigns which cross the East-West divide.

Jeux avec Frontières!

Eastern Europe 1789-1989



The Economic Movement and the Polish Opposition

Debates within the Polish opposition reveal that the 'triumph of capitalism' hailed by Western pundits is neither unchallenged nor inevitable John Barrett explains.

THE RECOGNITION BY THE POLISH GOVERNMENT of the need to talk to Solidarity may be not unconnected to the development of Solidarity into something other than a national movement, and the concomitant gap which has been opened up between the leadership and the 'membership'. Following global trends, the 'market' is back in fashion, and not just among small circles of neo-liberal dissidents. In 1981 Solidarity's economic and social proposals put workers' self-management near the centre of its demands; in April 1987 'The position of the Solidarnosc union on the situation and avenues of transforming the Polish economy' stated:

'We demand a deep-going reform, one that will introduce equality of all sectors of ownership and reject dogmas; a reform that will limit the role and function of the state in the economy, giving the fundamental role to market mechanisms; a reform that will achieve a decisive democratization of economic life and which through the growth of self-management and stock ownership by workers, will aid the process of the socialisation of economic life....'

About which, one of the main authors of the 1981 programme has observed:

'The main impression you cannot help getting after reading the 'Theses on the Second Stage of the Reform' presented by the government, and the 'Position of the Solidarnosc union....', is one of a very clear coming together of the conceptions of both parties. This concerns above all the establishment of market mechanisms in the economy.... A certain meeting of ideas has taken place on the question of workers' self-management.'

In the government's 'Theses' you no longer find generous-even general-statements about this similar to those contained in the 'Orientations of the Reform' in 1981. The present document reveals the strategy of a slow retreat, the disappearance of certain elements of self-managing controls. Solidarnosc, for its part, has taken a much less determined stand on self-management than in the resolution of its Congress....'

Ryszard Bugaj, *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, May 20th 1987

Market mechanisms are becoming for the Soviet Bloc today the panacea for its social and economic ills.

Market mechanisms are becoming for the Soviet Bloc today the panacea for its social and economic ills. For Mikhail Gorbachev the problem with his society is that it has 'violated the organic connection between the measure of labour and the means of consumption' and he bases his reform on:

'...dramatically increased independence of enterprise and associations, their transition to full self-accounting and self-financing, and granting all appropriate rights to work collectives. They will now be fully responsible for efficient management and end

results. A collective's profits will be directly proportionate to its efficiency.'

Perestroika Gorbachev.

Together with surreptitious assaults on political liberties (increase in the 'rights' of the militia to enter and search private homes, decrees against organisers of unofficial demonstrations (July 29)) the reform programme of the Soviet ruling class bears a remarkable resemblance to the deregulative initiative of the 'Economic Movement' (See Here and Now No. 6).

This belated acceptance of the disciplinary potential of the market by Eastern bloc leaders has opened up considerable divisions within the opposition, no more clearly visible than in Poland.

For many, amongst the leadership of Solidarity the 'free market' has become the only solution:

'It has proved simply impossible to patch up the system, and what is more, the Polish crisis is not a specifically Polish one. That is, it is not due to any particular corruption of the Polish regime or any particular revolt of the Polish people, but it is a general crisis of this type of system. The arrival on the scene of Gorbachev in a way testifies to this. Discussions about some hypothetical ideal system do not interest me. It is clear that the socialism that exists, that 'actually exists', as they love to repeat, is a system that leads to a total impasse. And we have no other alternative model to that of the market; no one has dreamed up any others.'

Jan Litynski. Member Warsaw Regional Executive Commission (Across Frontiers, California.)

This places the leadership in conflict with its own members who have been fighting the effects of economic policy, whether traditional state management or 'new' market initiatives, throughout the last 7 years.

The origin of this conflict lies in the gap which opened up between a leadership confined by circumstance to theorise about Poland's national destiny and a working class civil society forever coming up against the reality of social and economic crisis. While Solidarity's call for a boycott of the new unions and the self-management commissions* in 1982 might have convinced its ideologues that struggle had been suspended for the duration, in actual fact people in the factory did not give up, and didn't search for new compromises. Instead they used the self management commissions to maintain a modicum of dignity and organisation at work. It is necessary to go into what happened here in some detail, because it shows how the differences arose between the workers and the Solidarity leadership. By calling for a boycott Solidarity was performing a political role, it was challenging the structures of the government, trying to prove to it, who had the more authority. This ignored the social basis of Solidarity, which was that in the factory, it was a union, an organisation committed to defend workers on the small and insignificant level as well as the national and political and in the 'streets' it was a civil society with all the conflicts of interest that implies. When Solidarity called for a boycott, the conditions which created the discontent that made Solidarity did not go away, and nor did the impulse to try to do something about them.

Self-management commissions were legalised in December 1982. At first they performed the traditional Leninist function as transmission belts of Party diktat, but increasingly workers began to use them in pursuance of improvement of conditions. In Wroclaw by 1985 30 commissions existed with activist involvement, and links were made between factories. In Warsaw individuals on self-management commissions began to meet in a Catholic club to exchange experiences. Whereas initially the commissions were concerned with basic factory matters (repairs to toilets etc.) they began later to extend their concerns. Protests were made about workers who had been sacked, and resolutions were made about the 'social foundation' (a levy from workers' pay which was supposed to go towards social initiatives). The commissions argued that the money should go to the families of political prisoners and designated their own social projects for financing. At the Polar works in Wroclaw the self-management commission became entirely composed of activists who passed on knowledge to other factories. Last summer 10 workers attempted to register their commission as a union called Solidarity. The attempt failed but the 6 months it took for the court to arrive at a decision gave ample opportunity for people to get to know the organisation. At the PONAR mechanical instruments factory in Ostrzeszow activists took control first of the self-management commission, then the factory circle of the Democratic Party (Stalinist front designed to represent the petty bourgeoisie), and finally the 'new' official trade union. In the spring of 1987 this official union called a strike and won the promise of a 7,000 zloty increase for everyone.

While National Solidarity had mutated from a position of abstention to one of participation, part of its 'membership' or constituency had developed from a position of participation in the self-management commissions to one of combativity, or at least had preserved the potential to be so. National Solidarity had spent some time in internment camps, and had necessarily lost touch with the factories.

Coupled with a fear of invasion and/or total economic breakdown, a real separation had opened up between the workers and the National leadership of Solidarity:

'The pattern of activity of the opposition often comes down to a group of armchair politicians' meeting and producing a thick and high-priced journal. They write about Jaruzelski, about Reagan, about geopolitics and the 'premises of conceptual reflection', about 'neo-conservatism in the U.S.A. and so on and so on. And then they say, 'Walenty, go distribute that in your factory.'

'Few people still take an interest in the work of the underground trade-union commissions, in ways of helping the activists who, fighting against their own fatigue and the passivity of the workers, are continuing Solidarnosc activity in the factories... Are we really incapable of developing new forms of activity in the factories? In our opinion, we are not! We can and we must do so. And the key to that is to get it into our heads that what is important is not personal battles for a seat in the leadership but the strength and effectiveness of the factory organisations.'

AG Rawicki in **Robotnik**.

National Solidarity sees itself as a saviour of the nation rather than a workers' organisation. Hence it is increasingly seduced by the desire to formulate prescriptions for the cure of the sick Polish nation. The statement below, comes not from a cabal of Friedmanite economists ensconced within the Party apparatus but from Solidarity ideologues:

'An economic miracle in Poland involves not only structurally changing the economy and releasing human energy, but also budget cuts, the creation of a capital market and the elimination of money in excess of what there is to be bought on the market. It is necessary



to envisage a drop in the standard of living of many social groups and even localised unemployment.'

Lawina, Poleski, Zalewski in **Tygodnik Mazowsze** underground journal (1986).

The Solidarity leadership has taken upon itself the burden of national unity, and hence begins to act more and more like a state. Instead of seeing that Solidarity was many things: a union, a social movement for political liberty and a civil society in itself, full of arguments and differences, the 'old' generation of Solidarity activists have succumbed to the myth of an identity of interest within the nation for the nation, and on that assumption seem to be ready to dish out sacrifices for the price of 'establishing honest dialogue between the authorities and society'. (Letter of Lech Walesa to US Congress). The choice of market mechanisms as the replacement for the state as the determinant of rationing betrays either a loss of memory in the origins of Solidarity or a loss of faith in the people who began that movement, for there is still an untried option, the extension of direct democracy and self-management.

National Solidarity sees itself as a saviour of the nation rather than a workers' organisation. Hence it is increasingly seduced by the desire to formulate prescriptions for the cure of the sick Polish nation.

Opposition to the current line comes from many quarters. Kornel Morawiecki of Fighting Solidary Organisation (now smuggled back into Poland after his enforced exile) has said:

I do not agree with the thesis advocated by Lech Walesa and Jacek Kuron, among others, that now is not the time to put forward wage demands, that it is necessary to tighten our belts. Poverty is growing and people are working harder and harder, up to 12 hours a day. It's better to clench our fists than tighten our belts.'

while others find the notion of the 'lesser evil' of participation somewhat empty:

'In fact on this question precisely the obliging economists have slipped us the notion that the evil - that is, the impoverishment of people - is protecting against a still greater evil, the collapse of the economy. And we had begun to forget that this economy was supposed to be for people; we had forgotten what was said clearly in August 1980. Confrontation was imposed on us. The discussion is continuing around the question of how to transform a situation of confrontation into one of compromise. The problem is that compromise can only be the result of confrontation, it cannot replace it.'

Jerzy Krzewina **KOS** journalist.

The formation of the Polish Socialist Party is also evidence of a growing disenchantment with the false universalism of a Solidarity leadership which claims to speak for everyone. In fact the PPS makes a point of saying that it represents certain interests, namely the oppressed in society. Far from worrying about breaking ranks the PPS believes the fragmentation of the opposition to be a good thing:

'In the Polish opposition, there is a general problem. In my opinion, it can be summed up as the need for a pluralist opposition. Seven years ago, Solidarnosc represented both a platform of national identity, a union in the classical sense of the term, and a fight for a free market. Various movements existed within Solidarnosc. It was

a social movement that proved to be an excellent means of struggle against totalitarianism. Over these seven years, the lay of the land, however, has changed. We are witnessing an evolution of this system - I don't know whether you can call this a reform, but the system is changing nonetheless. This is why the form of unity characteristic of Solidarnosc seven years ago is finished, why it no longer serves much purpose.

We are witnessing a very clear emergence of systematic contraposition between two opposite poles. On the one hand, we have Marcin Krol and his magazine Res Publica and the economic societies, which are trying to organize and agitate for a classical free-market economy. On the other hand on the left, we have the formation of the Polish Socialist Party. We are in a period of diversification of the opposition.'

Josef Pinior. (Regional Treasurer Lower Silesian Solidarnosc), Recently released from prison for leafletting a factory.

As an aside, it should also be observed for the benefit of the cohorts of Leninists currently courting the PPS, that its commitment to the oppressed does not commit it to universalistic theories with the oppressed as historical revolutionary subject. The challenge in Poland today is against those who would iron over the wrinkles and creases in the opposition to present a neat and tidy unity. Walesa's characterisation of the struggle as being between 'the society' and 'the power', so effective in 1980, is now obscuring differences which have to come out, and obstructing the development of an alternative to the market oriented policies of both state and traditional opposition.

The Solidarity leadership has taken upon itself the burden of national unity, and hence begins to act more and more like a state.

What are the prospects for the Walesa/Jaruzelski talks? I will avoid any particular predictions since the results of the talks will probably be well known before this article is published, but a sense of the deep resistance to the machinations of the authorities is provided by Andrzej Gwiazda, once vice-president of Solidarity, now a painter, but still an activist. Market-reforms are likely to increase the exploitation of workers on the shop-floor, as we know from our own experience. The resistance to such measures is likely to be highly effective, at least according to the experience of Gwiazda:

'I have been working in industry for thirty years, and the workers still surprise me by their imagination. Their norms are increased, and despite that they manage to maintain their wages at the same level. I am a worker with a number of skills. I have worked as a lathe-operator, a welder, and now I am a painter. So, I can judge how much time is necessary to make a given product. The norms are such that it seems totally impossible to do the work in the assigned time, but they manage it. Simply they do not respect the technological process. From the outside, the product seems to meet specifications. It even has, if necessary, the indicated dimensions, but this product maintains its use value ten times less than it should, because it is produced by eliminating 80% of the specified technical operations. All the workers' inventiveness is directed toward finding means for eliminating them.

The present economic reform will force workers to find more tricks of this sort. On paper productivity will increase, and they will therefore maintain the level of their wages. But the economy will break down still more.'

Any apparent victory of the Economic Movement in Poland still

faces the un-institutionalised resistance of those who actually do the job. How much this is down to the primitive nature of management and surveillance, and how much to the overall failure of the Polish system to integrate its people is difficult to say. In Poland the use of market mechanisms by the ruling Party has exposed those mechanisms as mere techniques of social control and consumer rationing. Although self-management under state control has proved to be little more than a procedural sleight of hand attempting to extract more labour from the workforce, there is no guarantee that it will turn out to be anything more than this under a market economy. The divisions which the Economic Movement has prised apart in the Polish opposition may indicate the beginning of an assessment about economic models which goes beyond the binary polarity of state control versus the 'free market', and one which does not simply find the answer lying somewhere between the two. It is my hope that some kind of substantive self-management will be at the heart of this alternative, an alternative towards which a Czech writing after 1968 was also pointing:

'Certain economists think the councils should be a sort of transition between the old and new methods of management, between unskilled political management and skilled non-political, technocratic management. But workers' councils are the expression of a need which intends to lead power over production in a completely different direction, and not to some ideal state where technicians and economists would make decisions with their perfect knowledge of production processes and would deliver us from all our worries. Both wish us to enjoy a peace far removed from any worries, where we may benefit from the little pleasures of private life and precisely from nothing else....'

All these professionals in the art of government have a deep mistrust of workers' power, and with good reason. If the workers decide to take production into their own hands, it is because they no longer want to be mere components in the process of production. They want to replace the principle of objective management with the subjectivation of production. This is the great challenge to the secular principle of the European mind; it signifies a fundamental reconstruction of society, the annihilation of its tradition of passivity and therefore the destruction of its normal organisation; it is revolution in a concrete form, opening the path towards a pluralism entirely different from any we can imagine today. It can no longer even be called democracy, or government of the people, because it is no longer a government; there is no one left to govern any more.'

Jindrich Chalupecky. (from 'All Power to the Workers Councils')
published in **Listy** Feb 1969.
from: **Workers' Councils in Czechoslovakia. Documents and Essays.** Ed. Vladimir Fisers. □

* Self Management Commissions are elected by 600 workers. If any of the workers are dissatisfied with a commission they can call for a re-election by presenting a petition with 20% of the 600 workers' signatures. Self management commissions have to be re-elected every two years.

Most of the quotations came from **Newsletter of International Labour Studies** (35/6) except where otherwise stated.

Information on self-management commissions comes from discussions with Andrzej, a worker in Wroclaw Polar works, and Tadeusz, worker at Polish Fiat, Warsaw.

REPORTS

AGAINST ALL BORDERS!

While Mrs. Thatcher may wrap herself in the Union Jack to protest the formation of a 'United States of Europe' and European policemen express surprise to their British counterparts that they cannot stop people in the street and ask for their I.D. at will (yet!), an altogether less sinister and exclusive campaign has been launched against all state borders. The much heralded 'ring of steel' which will surround the boundaries of the 'Common Market' states is being challenged by an initiative from Freedom and Peace (Gdansk) and London Greenpeace. Called the 'International Campaign for the Abolition of all State Borders' it argues for the relaxation of all border controls worldwide. While being somewhat naive, in my opinion, about the motives of the S.Korean students who marched to the border in Korea to demand reunification with Kim il Sung's North Korea, the campaign at least challenges any illusions people in Europe may have about the 1992 Single European Act which it describes as a **re-organisation** of borders. In Europe it proposes August 13th (the day when, in 1961, the

Berlin Wall began to be erected) as an annual day of protest, and the campaign can be contacted at:

Kladiusz Wesotek, Ulica Stupska 32/3, Gdansk 80-392, Poland.
London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1.
England.

n.b. London Greenpeace is a different organisation from Greenpeace Ltd.

London Greenpeace are also attempting to facilitate grassroots links through the Iron Curtain by organising trips for British miners and striking Dover seamen to visit their counterparts in Poland. The initial target is £1400 and donations will be gratefully received at 'England/Poland Workers' Solidarity Appeal', c/o Greenpeace (London), 5 Caledonian Road, London. N1. Please make cheques payable to London Greenpeace (England/Poland Workers' Solidarity Appeal).

Oranges and Lemons

Surrealist Politics are not confined to the Western Metropolis. George Branchflower uncovers the many-headed form of Wrocław's Orange Alternative and asks some questions.

OVER THE LAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS, WHILE MORE familiar protest has been gathering pace across Eastern Europe, in the industrial town of Wrocław a new dissidence has emerged. Socialist Surrealism has arrived in Poland under the banner of Orange Alternative. Unlike those pursuing nationalistic or economic freedom, Orange Alternative make no explicit demands at all; rather, they have adopted an altogether more radical strategy - that of directly challenging on the streets the State apparatus' monopoly on Truth. During the last year and a half, the Orange Alternative (so called because orange is a non-political colour in Poland - there is a nascent White Alternative in Warsaw) have staged a series of 'happenings' on the streets of Wrocław that have succeeded in attracting mass participation as they expose to ridicule some of the most deep-seated aspects of the ideological rhetoric of the communist State.

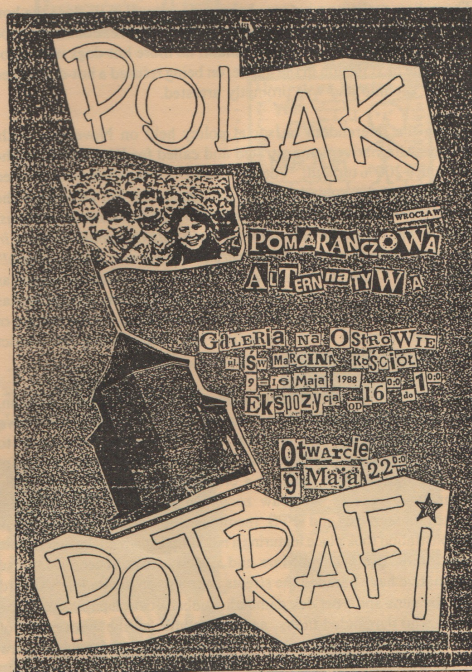
Many of these events have been truly inspired, combining playfulness with a ruthlessly tongue-in-cheek approach that has consistently wrong-footed the authorities. The prime mover and inspirational leader of Orange Alternative is the taciturn yet charismatic Waldemar Frydrych, known to all as 'Major'. Unshaven and dressed a little like a New Age traveller, the 35-year-old independent writer, former graduate in history and the history of art, generates a certain amount of reverence as more and more extraordinary tales grow up concerning his life. Major has been the main initiator of the 'happenings', the most successful of which have, as time has passed, been honed down into succinct anecdotes that have received some airings in the western press. For those that might have missed them, the most often reported of these starts with the 'happening' on 1st June last year, International Children's Day, when dozens of participants dressed as gnomes or smurfs with red hats danced in the streets and distributed sweets.

After an anti-war demonstration on 1st September, October 1st saw a 'happening' known as 'Who's afraid of Toilet Paper?'. Focussing on one of the primary espoused functions of the State as one of redistributing the social product, the decision was made to aid the authorities in their task - redistribution begins at home. At 4.00 p.m. in Swidnicka Street - site of many Orange Alternative happenings - Major and others solemnly distributed single sheets of toilet paper to passers-by. "Let us share it justly. Let justice begin from toilet paper. Socialism, with its extravagant distribution of goods, as well as an eccentric social posture, has put toilet paper at the forefront of people's dreams. Are the queues for toilet paper an expression of a) a call for culture?; b) the call of nature?; c) the leading role of the Party in a society of developed socialism? Tick the right answer." This same theme was later echoed when Major was arrested on International Women's Day for distributing sanitary towels in the streets.

October 7th is the Official Day of the Police and Security Service in Poland. This time, Wrocław youth under the banner of Orange Alternative decided to assemble and march to demonstrate their appreciation of these public servants for 'doing their duty with a smile', showering police officers and patrol cars with flowers. Attempts to embrace the police and thank them were met with reasonable force and Major was arrested once again.

Operation 'Melon in Mayonnaise' took place on 12th October, the anniversary of the Polish People's Army. Orange Alternative held 'manoeuvres' in the streets of Wrocław under the slogan 'The Warsaw Pact - an Avante-Garde of Peace'.

On 6th November, the eve of the October revolution, Orange Alternative held an elaborate celebration when about 150 people converged on a restaurant which had been designated the Winter Palace. Two groups had constructed large models of the battle-ships Potemkin and Aurora and the leaflets distributed beforehand to announce the event encouraged all to attend wearing something red to play the part of the Reds. Banners were carried bearing slogans such as "We support Boris Yeltsin" and "We demand the full re-habilitation of comrade Leon Trotsky" (leading to the misreporting in the western media, who missed the irony of the occasion, that the demonstration was by Trotskyist youth). Another banner demanded an 8-hour working day for the security services.



As crowds gathered and passers-by of all ages starged to join in and should 'Revolution' and Bolshevik slogans, those who had not brought something red to wear queued to buy a type of Polish hot-dog that comes liberally daubed with ketchup in order to hold them aloft.



Operation 'Melon in Mayonnaise'

The police, realising what was happening, moved in to close the hot-dog stall down. The vendor argued that he had never done such good business, but the police were adamant; no more hot-dogs were to be sold. The next person in the queue, on being refused a hot-dog, asked for just ketchup and was promptly arrested.

During the referendum on social policy held on November 27th, Orange Alternative demonstrated and called for Wrocław to be the city with a 200% turnout; "Vote 'yes' twice". 150 people were arrested and detained for a number of hours. Again on 7th December the streets were flooded with Santa Claus's "Bring Christmas decorations, fir branches to decorate the subway. Let's help the administration in this noble task... Let the new existence shape the new consciousness!!! Only Santa Claus can save you from poverty". Confusion reigned as the police tried to round up the Santas, arresting many official Santas in the process. A crowd of more than 2000 called for the release of Santa and pressed in on the police, later surrounding the district Police HQ, before being dispersed.

Such 'happenings' continued throughout Poland in Wrocław, Poznań, Gdansk, Krakow and Warsaw during this year; during the Nowa Huta strikes a letter was read out to the workers giving support to strikes in the most fulsome terms. The author of the letter was Lenin. Stalinist hymns were sung by a crowd which gathered round the chimpanzee cage in Wrocław zoo. On June 30th, following the release of activist and PPS members Pinior and Borowczyk a demonstration took place featuring a mock trial at which the defendants were Pinior, Borowczyk, Marx and Engels. More recently, Orange Alternative have paraded the streets in groups as the People's Guard with toy guns and a pet dog demanding identification papers from the police who demanded theirs, and this month, on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, 4000 people marched through Warsaw chanting 'We love Lenin'.

In all of these actions, Orange Alternative have enjoyed considerable success and popular support (on occasions attracting the participation of up to 13,000 people) by outwitting and embarrassing authorities who maintain a system which relies on a single version of the truth for its survival and who are used to a more direct form of protest. Whilst

initially Orange Alternative attracted some criticism that the style of their actions brought the opposition into disrepute, their success in partially de-mystifying opposition by involving ordinary people in actions in such a way that they do not have to take on the life-style of a militant means that they now have the support of many members of WiP and the PPS.

The two questions which occupy a central position in considering such a phenomenon, however, are firstly the long-term relationship between Orange Alternative and the more explicit aims of the rest of the Young Opposition in the Polish Socialist Party and Freedom and Peace (WiP), and secondly the contrast between the current success of the style of Orange Alternative and the decline of such tactics in the West. On the first question, at present, excellent relations and much crossover between Orange Alternative and other groups in the young opposition, even if Waldemar Frydrych eschews a definitively political interpretation of his motivation in organising the 'happenings'. When asked "Do you set up happenings in order to expose the totalitarianism of the system under which we live?" The reply was "I do them because I do them, but one does things because of, or for something... Well, yes, when I was preparing for the gnome happening, I assumed that we would have a good time with sweets and streamers..." Josef Pinior, former leading member of Solidarnosc and now an activist in the PPS describes himself as a "great champion" of Orange Alternative the content of whose actions "has been on the borderline between culture and politics, and had a surrealist form."

However, Orange Alternative, who are familiar with the ideas of Andre Breton and the Situationists, encourage self-expression and activity without a particular set of political demands - indeed the demands they make are often absurdist and obscure (eg., 'Freedom and Water' and 'Let the world forces of peace flourish in the shade of the martial arts') in order to avoid the star system of the official (Solidarity) opposition. At the same time, the PPS, for instance, is poised to consolidate and elucidate just such a set of demands in the form of a programme at this year's First General Conference, due to take place this November, shifting the PPS from a broad coalition of

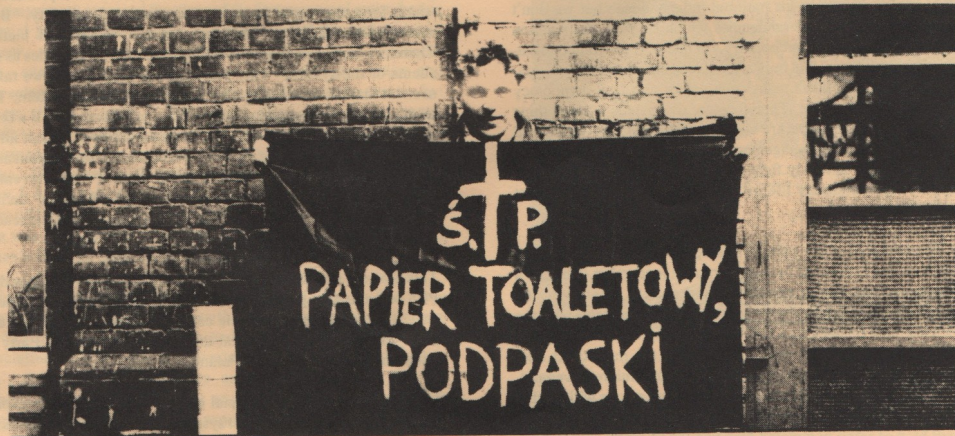
the young Left fighting for the rights of the oppressed to a more distinct opposition party. Whether this could, in time, bring them into any kind of conflict with the more anarchic antics of Orange Alternative or even whether such a move towards a programme actually takes place remains to be seen but it is tempting to see Orange Alternative as having the kind of expression that will always fertile ground no matter what administration is in power. Their irony and parody could theoretically be levelled at anyone who has a clear set of demands to put forward whilst they avoid criticism themselves through the advocacy of a perpetual 'party atmosphere' in order to "scout out the reality in which we live".

More immediately striking, however, is the fact that whilst the style of such a Socialist Surrealism is familiar to us in the West, such an approach has very little popularity here compared with the sixties and seventies. Indeed, the only events which have taken place in Britain in recent years which have had even a tiny element of some of the characteristics of Orange Alternative are perhaps the impersonation of businessmen during the 'Stop The City' demonstrations of the early eighties whose novelty quickly diminished, as the police just as quickly learnt to deal with them. Part of this contrast can be explained by the extent to which the authorities have learnt to handle ironic criticism and at the same time some of the skills of the more celebrated practitioners of 'political surrealism' have been enlisted by the free market. Witness Jerry Rubin's graduation from Yippie prankster to Yuppie party organiser and Jamie Reid's association with Malcolm McLaren to help 'market' anarchy and the Sex Pistols.

Similarly, in a recent Orange Alternative 'happening' General Jaruzelski had fun poked at him as 'The Dragon of Wavel' a mythical Polish figure. Jaruzelski replied on national television "I may not be the dragon of Wavel but I am a dragon". Initially felt to be a victory in terms of recognition for Orange Alternative, it was quickly realised that the lack of such a sense of humour had been precisely what Orange Alternative had previously been exploiting so successfully. This cunning response was thought to be the work of government spokesman Jerzy Urban, long known to be something of a quick-witted and smooth-tongued operator. Again, a story has emerged that on one occasion when Orange Alternative joined an official Children's Day parade, instead of meeting the usual heavy-handed police response they were merely officially announced over the tannoy "and here comes Orange Alternative" thus efficiently defusing their potentially disruptive effect by simply incorporating them into the celebrations.

Of course, Orange Alternative will still find plenty of mileage in an assured brutal and inflexible response from the authorities and this is their greatest weapon. But as a warning it should be noted, as the global market draws ever nearer, elsewhere that the skills necessary to reveal the multiple meanings within reality are in hot demand in the world of advertising and marketing. That is not to say that we live in Poland's future, of course, but we do live in a system where there is less reliance on a single official version of Truth, where multiple truths mean multiple opportunities for selling and where stripping away layers of meaning, ridiculing outdated assumptions with a flourish of smug cynicism and packing your message with multifarious bizarre and apparently unconnected references is the hallmark of the very cutting edge of po-mo advertising techniques, now even being adopted by the government in the marketing of social policy.

When we spoke to Major at a house in Wroclaw he waxed enthusiastic about the possibility of an Orange Alternative international event with thousands of people simultaneously across Europe dressing-up as police and patrolling the streets of major cities. Whilst such an idea has a certain breathtaking appeal, we in the UK already live in a society where the authorities themselves can organise, and with a straight face, a football match between striking miners and the officers policing them.



"Toilet Paper, Sanitary Towels R.I.P."

On the Polish Socialist Party

The following is a personal statement given exclusively to Here and Now magazine by Piotr Jkonowicz, editor of 'Robotnik' (previously paper of the Warsaw Inter-Enterprise Workers' Committee and now a Polish Socialist Party paper) and member of the General Council of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). While by no means agreeing with all that is said here, there are stated here some provocative comments which libertarians in the West might like to face up to. For example, is a plurality of property forms the only way to secure a free society? and do 'modernisation and growth' (terms very much under criticism in our society) take on a different, more positive value in countries which are demonstrably 'backward'?

Although written in English we have taken the liberty of tightening up some of the phraseology and grammar. We are pretty sure, and sincerely hope, that the meaning has not been affected.

“THE PPS DOES NOT HAVE AN ESTABLISHED programme and is composed of various currents and tendencies which are actually discussing the present meaning of Socialism in our society. This lack of a programme is somehow a programme of our party. We have simply overcome the necessity to have a total explanation of the social, political and economic reality in one consistent theory. Modern reality is too complex to be enclosed in a single formula. Nevertheless, there should be, and there is a common platform on which the modern Polish Left has met, thereby creating the PPS. There is no such thing as class struggle in Poland, but there is exploitation and great social differences in economic and social status so there are also underprivileged social groups. The PPS was created to defend them and to make a reform in Poland which could lead to more social justice.

We can't just change a few laws. What we should do is look for the kind of change which would lead to a completely new social and economic system. It means revolution but it does not necessarily mean violence. The PPS is a revolutionary party because one of its major goals is a democratic revolution. This is the very reason why our party is anti-constitutional. In the tradition of the Polish opposition this is something new. Even Solidarnosc with its 10 million members accepted the monopolistic communist rule which is inscribed in the constitution.

The PPS is also struggling for national independence but we don't repeat the mistake of other tendencies which suspend their action until Russian troops leave our country. While realising that qualitative social change is possible only after a deep structural transformation of the system, we don't make such values as social democracy and independence absolute. Therefore, for us, there is no such thing as a Socialist country, there are countries with more or less social justice, workers' self-management and national sovereignty. However you can't seriously fight to increase the presence of such values in Polish community life without questioning the communist bureaucratic rule.

Today the main goal of our party is to stop the realisation of a set of monetarist reforms prepared by the communist leadership. There is a new division in the Polish opposition and society created by the philosophy of the present reformers and this is the reason why the PPS focused itself on backing a real trade union movement inside the factories. Every economic reform, especially the monetarist one, requires sacrifice from the masses. If a vast trade union movement, led by the Polish Left is able to refuse those sacrifices we will be able to impose a social self-management reform instead of the authoritarian

neo-liberal one. All this activity should be led in cooperation with democratic, libertarian and Leftist movements all over the world and especially inside the Eastern Bloc.

All this is inscribed in a document entitled "Principles of Action of the PPS" which was the main cause of a split which took place in February. Some old generation dissidents showed themselves unable to keep pace with the young radical majority which is the core of the PPS. They represent the old dissident formula which approached Solidarnosc as representative of all the Polish people. But Polish people, as in all societies, are far from being homogenous. There are different social groups with their own autonomous interests. The notion of social solidarity as a universal and definitively unifying factor leads to one more ideological mystification, and is very similar to the socio-political unity of the nation proclaimed by the Communist Party during the loan boom of the seventies. As a matter of fact to fight efficiently against the communist system, the essential thing is to understand it, and the logic of understanding a society and its internal mechanisms means making divisions based on interests and social groups' self-consciousness.

The key to making out the different interest groups is to understand the re-distributive role of the communist state. The irony is that we can't put a finger on any exploiting class. We can only indicate groups which are beneficiaries of this system of exploitation and which form the social base for the ruling tiny minority. But this minority becomes more and more anachronistic and inefficient. Therefore there is no reason to approach all the beneficiaries as eternal clients of the system. This point is very important if we take into account that the whole of society is overgrown by the system. To give an example it is enough to mention that every fourth Pole is a Director of something. In such a way, the State mediates in almost all social relations. To overcome this, an autonomous self-organisation of social interest groups is required, but such a vast movement of independent self-organisations which is rebellious by definition, requires some kind of ideology. In political terms it would lead to an alternative power.

This is a very new thing in the Polish opposition and it means that the PPS seeks to gain power in this country. This should become more easy when the ordinary people come to understand that the State's policy is anti-socialist and that the leading Communist Party is the main anti-socialist force in Poland.

In creating an ideology of social change we would like to avoid any dreams about a perfect socialist system. The first phase of a democratic

revolution will consist of realising the game of social interests. We believe that a state of conflict is natural and that the communists have frozen it with their powerful State 'overstructure' and by mystifying conflicts in order to be able to play with interests - 'Divide and Rule'. In this first phase the PPS will cooperate with all democratic and libertarian currents inside the Polish opposition, but to gain democracy and overthrow the political monopoly requires a strategy of a transitional period. If we want to do this in a peaceful, 'Spanish'* way then we cannot speak about revenge. We must leave some option for the ruling elite and it would be a great deal to give all of them very high pensions. Everyday every one of them wastes more of our labour value than they can get in high party pensions for the rest of their days. To do that we must come up with the support of the vast group of present beneficiaries of the system, by convincing the most efficient of them that democracy means modernisation and growth. They are very sensitive to this kind of argument.

In the second phase, we will split the democratic front and fight by ourselves to socialise the State, because our notion of democracy goes beyond the formal one. For us it means pluralization of property forms. It is necessary to establish laws which will make possible full

socialisation of factories. For example, if the workers want they can decide by referendum to be collective owners of their workshop and hire their own managers. It is also essential to make legal provision for the community form of property. The cooperative movement, trade union property and the private form - all of them should have equal legal status because every kind of human activity requires different forms of property and a socialist state with an amplified representation of even the tiniest groups of interest should by means of taxes, negotiations and socially controlled redistribution take care of a social welfare approach as one of its absolute values.

It is very important if you are on the Left to have a standpoint on Marxism. The PPS is not a Marxist Party but we recognize as most of modern sociology does that the Marxist method is to some extent useful in studying social problems. Our historical optimism isn't nevertheless due to Marxist historiography. We are the Left and as such we believe in the possibilities of the human being when humanely treated.

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* Believed to be a reference to the transition from dictatorship to democracy after Franco's death. □

Democratic Revolution

Printed below is the first national statement of the Polish Socialist Party since its foundation last year. Although it takes its name from Pilsudski's organisation, its ideas and membership mark it out as something different from a classic social democratic Party. The PPS is part of the 'young opposition', which rejects compromise with the authorities. It operates above ground, and although harassed by the police it has managed to gain membership in the thousands. Soon after its conception it was plagued with a split between its older, more cautious members and the 'radicals'. This seems to have been resolved in the radicals' favour. The statement was drawn up at a Congress consisting of 35 delegates. It was relayed to us over the phone, and one or two words were therefore unclear. Described as the PPS's attempt 'to break with social democracy' by one of its members, the statement is presented for debate and discussion internationally.

THE CURRENT IDEOLOGICAL CRISIS REFLECTS in the incapacity of traditional political options in the face of irrational and inhuman model of development. Contemporary capitalism, in the process of overcoming barriers to economic growth, has made such growth a goal in itself. Man becomes a burden and not a subject in the course of new technological changes. An ever growing part of the younger generation is paying a high price of unemployment and poverty for this model of development. This phenomenon, as well as the fact that the society doesn't shape the cultural and media process leads to alienation, racism and chauvinism.

In the so called third world countries - countries of dependent capitalism - an incomparably higher price is paid for this developmental model. The lack of economic self-sufficiency has led to political subordination, leaving them only the choice between authoritarian dictatorship and stalinisation.

Genocide, social apathy and economic bankruptcy are the cause of communist rule. Post-stalinist totalitarianism searches for new ways of holding on. The free market processes, accompanied by the power of the nomenclature, serve to consolidate and strengthen the

mechanism of exploitation and domination. A conflict is growing between the ruling elite and the layers enriching themselves under its protection, on the one hand, and the working majority on the other. The omni-present state which intermediates in all social relations is trying to hold the initiative in the process of change. In spite of the hopes of some circles of opinion, the reforms from above will not alter the main future of totalitarianism. The society wants to reform itself and not be reformed from above.

Socialists all over the world fight to transform labour into an instrument of liberation from poverty, domination and alienation. The experiences of the workers movement demonstrate that seizing the workshops and electing political representation of society moves us closer to the multi-sector economic system with social assurances based on the redistribution on the national product. In Poland where the dominant sector is state-owned and managed by the communist nomenclature, it is necessary to depoliticize this sector by removing the Polish United Workers Party from its monopoly over economic policy and management nomination. The enterprises should be managed by the workers and the managing personnel responsible to them. This alternative system which will be set up in this way opens

up a new horizon for civilisation. This alternative creates a new form of self-management and democracy. It enables the self-emancipating possibility of releasing society from the control of the military industrial complex and re-establishing the spoilt equilibrium between man and nature. The present crisis in the socialist movement may be overcome by sketching a systemic perspective of a new system which will be common for all societies living in different systems of dependence and domination. It requires imagination and political courage.

Polish workers have already broken the state monopoly over information and organisation. A time of breakthrough has come. In the course of workplace-occupying strikes, a consciousness is being born of employees becoming the real owners of their enterprises. Besides the Trade Union consciousness, a need for political activity is becoming apparent. The dynamics of this movement meet the resistance of post-stalinist totalitarianism. The irreformability of the system determines that the only chance for the working people becomes an 'alternative of power', whose function is the socialisation of the state, the seizure of economic power in the factory by the workers and the election of a democratic representation of society. In this way a community of producers and citizens will be established.

August 1980, Braszov, Karabach, Jastrzebie, are instances of the same phenomenon of the democratic revolution taking place at this moment - getting out of the totalitarian system and moving towards political democracy, socialisation of the economy and national independence.

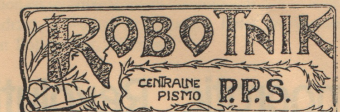
The abolition of totalitarianism can be effected only from below, by the will of the workers, by organising a movement in the factory for consciousness and for proposals for action. The Polish Socialist Party is taking an active part in building the alternative of power in the movement towards emancipation of Polish society.

In order to achieve these goals we consider it necessary to undertake the following action:-

1. Consolidation and development of the independent self-managing Trade Union Solidarity at the factory on a regional and national level;
2. Seizure by committees of self-management of the initiative in the management of factories and undertaking the struggle for a new form of self-management;
3. Setting up a horizontal and vertical coordination between committees of self-management;
4. Formation of self-management representation of working people on a national level, self-management chamber of Parliament;
5. Undertaking to campaign for a democratic electoral system for Parliament and local councils;
6. The struggle for the demilitarisation of the country.

Together these comprise the process by which society will attain subjectivity which will lead to a Free and Independent Poland.

First National Conference of the Polish Socialist Party
Warsaw, October 1988. □



REPORTS

Anatol Jakorski's Polish parents were deported to Siberia, along with thousands of others, by Stalin in 1939. Anatol, born in 1956 lived in a community perpetually having to fight to preserve its language and culture. He was refused a passport and denied Polish citizenship. In 1973 he tried to escape from the Soviet Union, but was caught and jailed for a year. After many adventures, including living rough and a 2 year spell in a Soviet psychiatric hospital, he finally got a passport and a month's visa to Poland, as a consequence of threatening a hunger strike, and a campaign launched by Poland's 'Freedom and Peace'.

Arriving in Poland in February 1988 Anatol attempted to extend his visa, and claim Polish citizenship. This was refused, and he has since gone into hiding, supported and sustained by the Freedom and Peace movement. He asks that people should protest to the Polish and Soviet embassies in any country. Messages of support, and copies of letters and official replies to be sent to: Krzysztof Galinski, Ul. Kraszewskiego 37/34 SOPOT, Gdansk 81715, Poland.

« Jeno Andics, an academic sociologist, has been appointed as propaganda chief to the Hungarian Communist Party. One of his first press statements was: 'My party has been an absolute failure for the past ten years.' »

Romania's Year Zero?

Mark Hinton exposes the Rumanian ruling class's assault on the last vestiges of mutual aid and support left to the peasantry.

IN APRIL THIS YEAR THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT published plans for the 'systematization' of agriculture. This plan to centralise and urbanize farming was originally promulgated in the mid 1970s (collectivization took place in 1962), but is only now being embarked upon on a scale which will transform the lives of millions. Nicolae Ceausescu's 'New Agricultural Revolution' of 1981 robbed Romanian farmers of control over the marginal private plots which had provided a little economic security in the face of the penury of working in the State sector. Now systematization goes a step further, razing agrarian villages and establishing concrete tower-block complexes known as 'agro-industrial centres'.

There is some (stalinist) economic rationale behind the project: the wholesale Taylorization of agriculture may overcome the problems associated with still poor levels of mechanization. However, like every aspect of policy making in Romania, social engineering appears to be a prime motive. And social engineering in Romania is *not* typical of the kind of routine bureaucracy we associate with **modern** Soviet-type societies. Once Ceausescu might have been looked upon by the naive as another Tito, with his rhetoric of an independent Romanian road to (state) socialism and his irreverence towards the Warsaw Pact; now Romania stands out as a parody of old-time Stalinism and the Total State ¹.

Systematization would have various functions. Most obviously, its opponents see it as a further stage of the complete Romanization of the country's politically sensitive Hungarian minority. The bulldozing of their Transylvanian villages - laden with centuries of cultural and architectural heritage - has evoked outrage in Hungary, where the dispossession of the Transylvanian Magyars has become an explosive issue ².

Of the six or seven thousand villages due for demolition, around 1500 are predominantly Hungarian. Given that the Hungarian minority constitutes only 7.8% of the population, it is not difficult to see why systematization is seen as a form of culturicide. It may also be that the much smaller German and Gypsy minorities will bear a disproportionate brunt of the process. But it remains ethnic Romanian villagers who will be the majority of those affected.

Systematization, then, is not simply an anti-Magyar policy. Ceausescu's demolition of whole areas of old Bucharest to build a vast - and by all accounts grotesque - 'Victory to Socialism Boulevard' is symptomatic of a wider desire to obliterate the past and construct a new order shaped in every detail by the hand of "The Conductor". As a writer in the **Financial Times** commented of Bucharest, "It is as though history did not exist before Communism". Systematization would be the realization of this ambition in the Romanian countryside.

One can guess the level of tension in Romanian society today. The worker-student unrest of November 1987 vanished as suddenly as it appeared, but we can be sure of its reappearance ³. A flow of refugees into Hungary continues, with the Hungarian opposition actively supporting, and the government turning a blind eye to emigre agitation. There are rumours - unverified but credible - of near famine in some areas. Yet the 3 million-strong Communist Party and the vast **Securitate** (secret police) network seem to retain their grip, perhaps

An ardent love vibrates in us
Our hearts are full of song
What we are we owe to the Party
And the Party has made us
masters of all.

Under the purple banner of Truth
The country is united
Facing the future

Forward with joy,
Forward with the Party of our
beloved leader.

... Dear Leader (Refrain)

(from Romanian TV)

even strengthened by the antagonism between the Romanian and Hungarian governments. Maybe people believe that when Romania's foreign debt is purged in a few years time, there will be an end to grinding austerity; or, more likely, people are just waiting for Ceausescu to die.

In this climate, systematization will be used as a means of psychological warfare. A recent report in **The Independent** described one village designated for imminent demolition waiting for bulldozers that never came. Perhaps (quite possibly) there has been insufficient fuel to carry out the first wave of demolitions (due to begin in September, after the harvest); perhaps the authorities hope that an atmosphere of confusion and insecurity will allow them to sit out any new spate of unrest which may erupt as winter bites. □

¹ A Polish friend told us that at one time Romanian bookshops stocked records of massed choirs singing hymns to Ceausescu; now there are records of joint Romanian-North Korean choirs singing in honour of both Ceausescu and Kim Il-Sung.

² On June 27th, 40,000 people demonstrated in Budapest against systematization: the biggest unofficially-organised gathering in Hungary since 1956.

³ Little known in the West (probably because of the absence of open opposition organisations) waves of localised strikes and demonstrations, particularly in early winter, are virtually annual in Romania, especially (but not exclusively) in Transylvania.

The Real of Socialism

In an article reprinted from 'Independent Voices From Yugoslavia' Thomas Mastnak reveals further peculiarities in the interminable evolution of Eastern European 'socialism'.

IN THIS TEXT I AM GOING TO DISCUSS A STRUCTURAL shift which has happened in Yugoslav socialism in the last two decades. I will concentrate on the relation between the official ideology (to use an obsolete term) and the Yugoslav People's Army. This shift could be described as a three-stage process in which (1) the Party militarized society and lost its ideological "leading role"; (2) repressive apparatuses of the state took over the formulation of the official ideology to bring it to a dissolution; (3) the army decided to act beyond ideology as a material force in itself. I hope this could contribute to a better understanding of the present wave of repression in our country.

The mid-sixties were characterized by an attempt to reform the economic system. The reform failed. One of the elements contributing to this failure was the criticism of the social consequences of the reform raised by the student movement. This criticism was skilfully used by Tito's group to stop the reform and, consequently, to eliminate its protagonists from political life. The purge in the political sphere was extended to the economic structure (a great number of managers, denounced as "technocrats", were dismissed), and to the sphere of culture. The early seventies represent an overture to a cultural revolution of the Yugoslav type, to an era of political arbitrariness in which power was not bound by law and neither might be counteracted by right, and to the economic decay which is, in this country, euphemistically called a crisis.

The restoration of order was presented by the victorious political faction as a revolutionary war. The reformers of the sixties were accused of "rotten liberalism" by the revolutionaries of the seventies, while they themselves declared themselves "the soldiers of the revolution". What is of importance for my argument is that the Party responded to the liberalization of the sixties by a growing militarization of society of which the militarization of ideology I have just indicated is only an aspect. We have to pay attention to the fact that it was not the police which carried out the normalization (although a purge of the state security took place in 1966); it was not even the army itself. It was the Party which brought the situation under control and undertook the militarization. The leady seventies instituted not a police-state, rather they constituted a militarized society.

This militarization imposed on society by the Party was not complete in accordance with the constitution, it is true, yet it corresponded absolutely with the official ideology, to the Party's ideal of a socialist society. It was, in my view not unjustly, declared to be a great step forwards to a "socialization of defence", i.e. towards implementation of the old socialist idea of "social" resp. "popular defence". Let me mention briefly just three moments of this militarization of society. (1) A very important role was played by Committees of General People's Resistance and Social Self-Defence in the mid-seventies. A Party Congress - being an institution above the Constitution - ordered they had to be organized everywhere people work and live: in factories, schools, local communities and municipalities, etc. So it happened that the military spirit literally permeated society. These Committees enjoy very great powers, including the power to declare an emergency if a situation seems to be out of the Party's control. In this way, a semi-political and para-military body was invented which is beyond the Party's control which is already beyond social control. The Party evaded social control by inventing an organization through which it is

controlling itself. By a cunning of dialectical reason it transformed its weakness into its greatest and ultimate strength; it found the way to control even the situation which is out of control. How this works, we learned when there was a harbor strike at Koper, three years ago; the Committee of General People's Resistance and Social-Self Defence at the harbor declared an emergency in order to suppress the strike. (2) Obligatory military education, including lessons on how to identify "political enemies" and a training to use weapons, was introduced to universities (in addition to military education already existing in secondary schools) and the so-called patriotic education even at kindergarten level, so little children have to recognize the picture of "our Marshal Tito" and learn how the Germans invaded Yugoslavia and the partisans fought them. At elementary school it is still taught that the Germans and Italians were our enemies: enemy images are constructed on the basis of national characteristics. (3) Obligatory military service was extended. Prior to this, students were allowed to serve the army after finishing their studies, now everybody has to serve at the age of eighteen, immediately after finishing secondary school. It is not necessary to remind of the effects such a violent break has on education.

What we are experiencing now is an implosion of the system. The present system is characterized by an absence of any common point of reference.

To sum up: the militarization of society in the seventies was initiated and carried out by the Party; it was a realization of its ideas and ideals; it could be interpreted (and in fact was interpreted) as a development of socialism.

Crucial changes began to emerge in the first half of the eighties. The repressive apparatuses of the state (to use the descriptive Althusserian term) began to take over the formulation and interpretation of the so-called ruling ideology. The Party had lost the ideological initiative, and as it is defined, in Yugoslav system, as "the leading ideological force" the question might be raised whether it has not lost its *raison d'être*. This shift was for the first time clearly visible at the trial of the "Belgrade Six", 1984/85. It was the public prosecutor who appeared as the Great Ideologist. This was, of course, no more than the beginning, the first phase of the change. In the years to follow, it was more and more the army which obtained the position of the ideological arbiter and took possession of the right to declare what socialism means, i.e., what is right and wrong, what is allowed and what has to be prosecuted.

This development escalated after the congress of the Alliance of Socialist Youth of Slovenia, in April 1986, which definitely legalized new social movements. These movements were among the first, if not the first to question the position of the Yugoslav People's Army in the

system. The army has been, namely, until recently, the most untouchable moment of the untouchable socialist system, the untouchable, a sacred thing. Perhaps the most controversial issue raised by the new social movements with regard to the army, has been the peace movement's initiative to recognize conscientious objection and to introduce an alternative service for the objectors. This initiative was found scandalous for two main reasons: (a) it reintroduced the category of conscience which had been erased under the socialist rule (so to say, dissolved or replaced by "class consciousness") and which represents a moment of the liberal resp. democratic, i.e., non-socialist social and political imaginary; (b) it questioned the state monopoly of our bodies (a classical articulation of this monopoly is to be found in the HJ's Leistungsbuch claiming "Dein Körper gehört deiner Nation"). Besides this, the peace and feminist movements resisted relatively successfully the plan to impose an obligatory military service for women (in the eighties, a so-called voluntary women's military service was introduced). Other issues could be mentioned of course, but it is sufficient to illustrate the developments.

Generally speaking, the new social movements have been the "central" actors of the democratization of the country and the army has been their most coarse and decided adversary. And as politics in socialism is nothing but ideology, the mere fact that the army pretends to be the trustee of ideological orthodoxy means an increasing politicizing of the army which effects a growing militarization of politics. What does this mean?

If the army is taking possession of ideology this does not mean that the Party has been eliminated from political life. The army itself is organized as a party. Military officers are in principle members of the League of Communists, and as such they are organized as a political body which forms as its highest agency the all-Yugoslav Party's Conference of the Yugoslav People's Army. As it is known, the Yugoslav League of Communists is organized, roughly speaking, on territorial principle: each republic has its own Central Committee and the two provinces have their Conferences of the League of Communists. On the federal level they constitute the Central Committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists. The army's party organization is an exception from this rule, it is a sort of surplus. Besides this, it is, as a constitutive part of the federal Party, federal in itself. As a part, it is a whole, and as the surplus, it determines the totality. While the republic party organizations are captured by respective local or national interests, the army's party organization is said to be beyond the so-called nationalist particularisms and it embraces the whole territory of the Yugoslav state: as a particular agency it embodies the universality. While the other Party's organizations, including the federal, are divided by ideological disputes and political heterogeneity, the army's Party seems to be distinguished by political unity and ideological monolithism. It likes to hear of itself and it itself likes to repeat it is "cista ko suza": pure as a tear. Besides all this, it is immediately a material force: it is an armed party. As such, it is the hard core of the Party. The peculiarity of this constellation is that a specific, particular state apparatus is directly politically organized: the army is organized as a party. A particular repressive state apparatus represents the universal of the Party. The armed party is the heart of the heart of the political system.

Yet, the real problems arise here and the attempts to solve them lead to the third stage of the development I am describing here, its "novejsyj etap", we have just entered in. Again, a short report of the empirical evidence is needed. There are rumors and news spreading that a military restoration of order was planned in Slovenia this spring, a frustrated military coup. Self-evidently, it was officially denied. The logic of this denying, a typical Freudian Verneinung, could be summed up as follows: (a) nothing happened, the whole story was fabricated and is nonsensical; (b) although nothing happened - so the official explanation goes - we've informed you regularly; (c) although nothing happened and all has been invented, a special commission will be formed to investigate into this affair. Let's suppose that what has not happened really happened and try to describe the structure of the development.

I have pointed out that the army is obtaining the right to define the official ideology and that it is, as an armed party, immediately a material force. The preparation of the frustrated military coup followed a harsh ideological campaign characterizing the democratization in Slovenia as a counterrevolution and a "special war" waged against Yugoslavia and socialism. The pretext resp. the inducement to the campaign was a criticism of Yugoslav arms-trade published in Slovene newspapers this February as the secretary of defence visited Ethiopia, a state involved in a civil war, and the revelation that soldiers serving military service had to build a villa for the secretary of defense Branko Mamula. The campaign was obviously tuned up by high army officers. And here something unexpected happened. The campaign was so extremely unconvincible that its effect was the opposite of its aim. It was simply ridiculous to read resp. to hear of a counterrevolution and a special war, so people were making jokes about it. The sharpening of the so-called ideological course turned out to be a delirium of the official ideology. Yet his ideological collapse didn't stop the campaign, its protagonists decided instead to make a step further. They decided to act beyond ideology.

Here I will make use of the well-known metaphor, saying ideology becomes a material force at the moment it has gripped the masses. In our case the attempt of the armed Party ideologically to grip the masses failed, and at the very moment the armed Party's ideology failed to become a material force the armed Party set in as a material force in itself.

What we are experiencing now is an implosion of the system. The present situation is characterized by an absence of any common point of reference. The political has disappeared, the symbolic framework has been destroyed and the Yugoslav People's Army has been offered instead as the only bond to hold this country together. The disappearance of the official ideology means a loss of the rational of the system. What has been left to guarantee the existence of socialism is pure force.

There is no future. And as there is no future socialism has ceased to exist. The impossible conjunction of democratism and authoritarianism which has made socialism possible has been deconstructed. What has been left over is its authoritarian contents. This is no longer real socialism. It is the real of socialism. Socialism represents no alternative and there is no alternative to socialism. □



AFTERWORD

IT WILL BE APPARENT that in this supplement we have not addressed a phenomenon at least as significant as the deregulating enthusiasm of the Soviet apparatus, namely the spectre of Nationalism. The meaning of nationality and the political forces it brings into play are matters which are currently treated in the most ahistorical, uncritical and superficial ways by Western commentators. National movements are generally described in their own terms, uncritically, as if naive 'progressive' endorsement of **some** cultural identities did not entail disapproval of the incompatible aspirations of **others**. No amount of lamentation over inter-ethnic hostilities can be credible from those prepared to applaud nationalism in the selective way traditional on the Marxist Left (according to which some nationalisms are 'progressive' and others 'reactionary' - a strategic distinction usually determined by the prevailing configuration of 'fraternal' affiliations). The arrogance of expressions of 'support' as if they came from some transcendent position, above its own nationalism, is particularly characteristic of the English-speaking 'internationalist' voice.

Nationalism in Eastern Europe forms part of a larger process which calls for a re-examination of the very concept of the 'nation' and the 'state' in the West as much as in the East. It is not possible to grasp the implications of the various national struggles in Eastern Europe today without relating these also to the current changing conceptions of 'Europe' as a whole: recent cultural and geopolitical discussions about 'Mitteleuropa', and the re-emergence of rival France-German perspectives about militarism, and the German debates over 'post-conventional identity' are just instances of these larger developments. Whether it is the nationalism of Poland, or of Serbia or Armenia, or the Ukraine...or of Scotland, similar paradoxes arise - and they are not unconnected. If nationality is about the reassertion of the **particular**, it is nevertheless the case that nationality is a **universal** in the world today: it is always the **same** differences that are proclaimed everywhere, in the **same** terms. To even use the concept of the 'nation' is to imply that a collective identity is an instance of a **general** category: one along with all the others. This is what nationalist ideologues consciously demand: that Wales or Brittany or Slovenia be 'recognised' **as** a 'nation' according to the existing **concept** of a nation.

What proclaims itself as the vindication of 'difference' (the assertion of a special identity), is by the same token the denial and suppression of difference (internal divisions within the nation). Proliferations of 'identities' in the form of multi-dimensional specifications such as geography, race, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation produces nothing less than an attempt to simulate the concrete by means of abstractions - ultimately **administrative** abstractions. Does all nationalism aspire only to the creation of more states? Is the limit of the nationalist imagination the demand to be administered, regulated, and oppressed in one's own language? This paradox may be described as the paradox of a collectivism determined to embody itself in new apparatuses of state power which can only disaggregate the collective movement.

The concept of 'nation' thus involves claims to **state** formation and non-reciprocated exclusions and contradictions which cannot be ironed out by territorial boundaries (not all nations are definable by spatial locations: Jews and Armenians being the classic examples of peoples without discrete territories). Patriotism may not only be the last refuge of the scoundrel (an 'English' view of an equally 'English' vice), it may also be the most universal moral licence for murder. That Azerbaijanis have been massacring Armenians (as Serbians will inevitably be massacring Albanians) cannot be explained away by political-economic contingencies: it is essentially what nationalism is about. In the next issue of *Here and Now* we intend to examine the state of the nation, both in its Anglo-Scottish, as well as more general, ramifications. We therefore invite readers to submit articles, letters or comment on this subject for inclusion in the Summer issue.